

1, JANUARY 15, 1960

VOLUME XXVIII

Punch

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Articles

- 84 MALCOLM BRADBURY
Punch's British Musicals : Look Forward in Togetherness
- 87 H. F. ELLIS
Very Small Noises
- 89 PATRICK SKENE CATLING
The Perfect Hostess
- 91 J. B. BOOTHROYD
Mind that Split Lip
- 93 R. G. G. PRICE
New Look for Zoos
- 96 RICHARD USBORNE
The French for P. G. Wodehouse
- 99 MICHAEL GREEN
Old Crocks' Calendar
- 111 J. B. MORTON
Little Brief Authority : The "Age of Speed"

Verse

- 92 J. A. LINDON
For Those with No Head for Heights
- 98 E. V. MILNER
A Materialist MacMillennium
- 101 E. W. NASH
Ici on Parle Français-Americaln

Features

- 94 BALLISTIC MISSILE FIRING
DRILL
E. S. Turner with Russell Brockbank
- 102 IN THE CITY
Lombard Lane
- 102 IN THE COUNTRY
P. Elliott
- 103 TOBY COMPETITIONS
- 104 FOR WOMEN

Criticism

- 106 BOOKING OFFICE
Eric Keown : Larger than Life
- 108 THEATRE (Eric Keown)
- 109 FILMS (Richard Mallett)
- 110 ART (Adrian Daintrey)
- 110 RADIO (Peter Dickinson)

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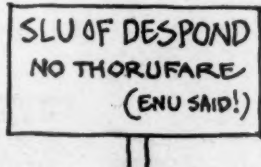
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The London Charivari

IT is tempting, as we read of Colonel Mahdawi raving away from his rostrum in Iraq, where he is Judge of the People's Court, to congratulate ourselves that our judicial system avoids that sort of thing. But often enough our judges, in their *obiter dicta* or irrelevant denunciations of litigants' characters, have seemed to believe that their office makes them superhuman. And there is another affinity; when he said "Jamaica? Isn't that the place where Eden went?" Colonel Mahdawi produced a specimen of conventional judicial ignorance that any member of the Queen's Bench would have been proud of.

Bad Address

NEW YORK suburbanites living on the New England Thruway are to receive compensation for discomfort caused by the lights, noise, fumes and vibrations of constant traffic, said to



interfere with sleep, health, conversation, recreation and radio and TV reception. Personally I should want compensation simply for living on something called a Thruway.

No Mention of Matheson Lang

THE full-page advertisements taken recently by Associated-Rediffusion

to announce their acquisition of another batch of old films included a list of stars appearing in them. This seemed pretty pointless at first. Then we noticed with amazement that the majority of them were still living, for once.

No Drill for This

A LONDON doctor has told the story of a man who barked every ten minutes for a year and a half, and



whose dentist simply couldn't attend to his teeth because of the noise. Luckily he was cured before his bite got worse than his bark.

Sic Transit

EMINENTLY sensible and practical is the Norfolk County Council's plan to buy sections of the old Midland and Great Northern Joint railway line, which was closed last February, for conversion into roadways. There the route lies; no sharp bends, no steep gradients, no unbridged intersections, and no prolonged negotiations with property owners and objectors. Only we old railway-fanciers will shed a tear at the thought of scooters and saloons bustling down the stretch from Aylsham



to Potter Heigham where once the noble locomotive roared, or at any rate rumbled, along. Will any traces of the great days remain? A signal here, set permanently (and now so misleadingly) at "safety," a crumbling station there? Will passengers waiting for their buses be permitted to huddle around the original empty stoves at Stalham and North Walsham? Probably not. But it would be a pleasant touch if the Norfolk County Council could bring themselves to abjure the horrible word "Lay-by" and simply say "Siding Ahead."

Wider Still and Wider

THIS coming spring, scientists are to listen through the radiotelescope at Green Bank, U.S.A., for evidence of intelligent beings on other worlds. Such evidence, they tell me, is likely to consist of radar signals illustrating simple mathematical notions, such as *Beep, Beep beep, Beep beep beep, Beep beep, Beep* (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 2, 1) or *Beep beep, Beep beep beep, Beep beep beep beep beep* (in other words, $2+3=5$). I hope the scientists will bear in mind the possibility that from really advanced worlds the signals may take the form *Beep beep beep beep beep beep beep beep beep beep* (perm any eight out of ten).

Realism

THE catering department of British European Airways, which annually serves about 1,750,000 meals aloft, served me one on the ground the other day, at the opening of the department's

exhibition in Dorland House, in Lower Regent Street. Good, rich, mixed fare it was, too: assorted canapés, potted shrimps, chicken Maryland with banana fritters, pastry and whipped cream, Stilton cheese, all sluiced down with champagne and cherry brandy. The luncheon was held in a complete replica of a B.E.A. cabin, poised immobile beside a mural low-level oblique photograph of London. I instinctively fastened my safety-belt and was relieved to find that the catering department, by force of habit or possibly modesty, had placed in the rack beneath each tiny folding table the customary large brown paper bag.

L for Leather

MY feelings are mixed about the lady who admitted carrying L-plates on her car although she had been driving since 1922. As her husband said, it lessens the risk "of being knocked about by someone else," and I sympathize with that. On the other hand I sympathize with the non-L motorist who spends so much of his time pulling out in wide, cautious arcs round L-platers that it's a bit hard to have to do it round an impostor who was probably on the road before he was out of little red tricycles. Once the rest of us get the idea that L-plates don't mean anything we could turn into a pretty reckless lot.



"Come across any of my family, name of Smith, live near the Edgware Road?"

REFUGEE YEAR

Demand for extra copies of our December 30 issue, containing RONALD SEARLE's refugee drawings, has been keen. There are still some available, however, from PUNCH Office, 10 Bouverie Street, E.C.4, price 1/- post free.

Early application is recommended.

Semi-Pro

A WIDOW TWANKEY who walked out of a pantomime at Bourne-mouth over a pay claim works all day in a men's clothing store. This is not the race of dedicated troupers we have known. Performers, from the kind villain in *Babes in the Wood*, through the refined drawing-room speciality that comes on with a bit of *Maritana* as a front-drop interlude while they're setting the big palace scene, to the girl who holds the illusionist's handkerchieves, have always been as devoted followers of their gleam as priests or poets, all the year round, even if it means filling in with Masonics and works outing cabarets. There have been one or two quick-change artists from board-room to boards, e.g., Al Read and Kenneth Horne, but this is the first Dame, other than one of the British Empire, I have heard of being sullied by commerce.

This Commodious and Desirable Cake

LADY PAMELA MOUNT-BATTEN's wedding-cake is a replica of her family home, Broadlands, which Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell describes as "comfortable and in refined taste." Worse still, I am afraid he even describes the building as "unsensational." The natural exuberance of cake-designers must find this hampering. The architect was Henry Holland, who should certainly be given a credit on the cake. I hope that the caterers have managed somehow to reproduce the pretty painted walls of the saloon, especially as Mr. Sitwell says Holland was bored by façades. As the knife ruthlessly sheers off walls and reveals, now a gilt frieze, now a relic of Palmers-ton, who once lived at Broadlands, exclamations of restrained admiration will mingle with the deferential murmurs of "A portion of west wing, madam?"

— MR. PUNCH



OUT WITH IT!

Book by Malcolm Bradbury and Barry Spacks



PUNCH'S * BRITISH * MUSICALS

Look Forward in Togetherness

SCENE: *Realism, of course. A large outhouse in the garden of an old slum property in an English provincial city. Post-war neglect by the landlord and the droppings of passing crows have added something scabrous to the already prevalent odour of decrepitude. Here live RUDOLPH WINTHROP and his wife, MIMI, daughter of Sir Wilkie Standish, a former colonel in the Nineteenth Hussars who was retired on a pension after mistakenly bombarding Gibraltar during the Suez campaign. Unbeknownst to all present, the outhouse is also used as a meeting place for the local cell of the I.R.A., which gathers weekly for readings from the plays of Brendan Behan. To the rear runs a British Railways branch line to a nearby glue factory, and a small goods train should pass back and forth during the action.*

RUDOLPH WINTHROP, newly-expelled from a provincial university for tunnelling from a convenient sewer into the showers of the women's dormitories, and now a vendor of low-grade curiosa at a stall in the town's market place, is seen using an electric iron, as the curtain rises, to expunge all the non-traditional elements from a recording of the Modern Jazz Quartet. MIMI has her back to the audience; she is breast-feeding her babies (triplets).

RUDOLPH: It's no good. I can't stand it. The war was going to change all this. It was going to be better. Now it's worse.

I'm a kind of new culture hero
I'm the angry, the beatnik, the bum
I start all my values from zero
And take all events as they come
I suffer from boredom and anomie
I don't feel in touch with a group
I've no analyst who'll make a man o' me
Oh brother, am I in the soup.

Cho: Call me angry, call me beat
I think the world is just a cheat.

I'm starting from scratch, ontologically,
And though people say I don't care
I've come to my standpoint quite logically
Reading Sartre and Carnap and Ayer.
I suppose I'm a touch Wittgensteinian
With a heightened sense of the absurd
I break down the world and begin again
Analytically weighing each word.

Cho: Call me Kierkegaardian angster—
Though you think I'm just a gangster.

MIMI: You'll disturb the babies, Rudolph.

RUDOLPH: Women! They're all the same! Have you ever seen anyone die? Then you're a virgin.

MIMI: Three times hostess to parthenogenesis—this cannot be common. I must write to the *Lancet*.

RUDOLPH: Until you've seen someone die. (*He picks up one of the babies and flushes it down the toilet.*)

MIMI: Oh, God, not again.

RUDOLPH: I'll pour the tea. Later we can play cows and grasshoppers. Or bees and asphodel.

MIMI: Rudolph! At last I have taken from you more than I can bear.

When you burned down my parents' manse
And stopped up every drain
At all the houses of my friends
I did not, then, complain.
I knew not then, alas, that I
Should live to see the worst.
In a class-gear'd society
Milk does not go in first.

RUDOLPH (*raving*): You upper-class women are all the same. Cannibals, feeding on a man's vigour. Well, social mobility is no longer a crime. (*Slavering.*) I've had enough. I'm going to my room. (*Exits gibbering. A moment later the rattle of a typewriter shows he is up to no good there.*)

MIMI (*crying*): I should never have married. Hypergamy is unbecoming to both parties.

Oh, mummy said, to get your man
You've got to read your Betjeman

Yes, I was the girl in the Wetherall coat
And the thick Jaeger jumper, not allowed yet the vote,
But in other ways fully endowed and mature
Knowing all about life (as a keen teviewer).
My shoes came from Dolcis, my values from *Vogue*
I read Nevil Shute and not Christopher Logue;
I went to the tennis club every fine day
And I went to find *him*, not to drink squash and play.
I was dull, I was dim, I was daft, I was green,

My perfume was half *Ma Griffe*, half *Germolene*.
I was soft, I was silly, and gauche, I was grim.
On the back of my Vespa was room just for him.
He'd be rich, he'd be county, and handsome, and tall,
Then he came, and he wasn't—he wasn't at all.

(During this song SIR WILKIE STANDISH has entered unnoticed. He is a true Edwardian (pronounced *Edvardian*) and consequently the bugbear of English letters just now. Decked out nattily in tweeds (pronounced *tweed*s), he now greets MIMI with affection.)

MIMI (throwing her arms around him, no small toss): Daddy!

SIR WILKIE (in hushed tones): Where is he?

MIMI: He's in the next room, writing his novel.

SIR WILKIE: Gad, Mummy and I thought he was a bounder, but I never thought he'd sink that low . . .

MIMI: Daddy, I'm so miserable. The glow has gone out of our marriage. It's not a bit like it was in the good old days.

SIR WILKIE: Ah, the good old days! Beating off the screaming tribesmen with our polo sticks under a blazing sun!

Oh, those were the days, yes, and those were the ways
I wish that we had them again,
The sun always shone, they should never have gone,
And it never once, then, seemed to rain.
Everyone knew his place, all the ladies had grace
And a gent was a gent was a gent;
The stout British lion the world had his eye on—
And if we sent a gunboat, it went.

(He goes into a soft-shoe routine, then pulls himself together.)

But quick, I've come to take you away. We must pack.
Isn't there an old bag of Rudolph's around here somewhere?

MIMI: Oh, you heard about her too.

SIR WILKIE: Wait! Perhaps there is a solution. (He reaches into the interstices of his Norfolk jacket and produces a copy of *McCall's*, an American family magazine devoted to the gospel of "togetherness." It falls open at a much-thumbed article entitled "Forty-nine Ways to Make Your Marriage Really Work," and giving a list of hints guaranteed to spring-clean anyone's wedlock.) Read that! It worked wonders for Mummy and me.

MIMI (blushing): Are you sure I should, daddy? Is it nice?

SIR WILKIE: Naught in there that could bring a mantling flush to a maiden cheek. After all, *McCall's* does have a family readership. Remember its motto: "The family that prays together stays together."

MIMI (reading): "Kiss your wife on the back of the neck once every day." "Go for walks together in the pouring rain." "Make your husband an especially good dinner every time you crash the car." I see it all now. Our marriage was not a partnership.

SIR WILKIE: Knew we'd soon sort this little thing out.

RUDOLPH (re-entering furiously—he is rendered neurasthenic and twitching when forced to remain offstage, hearing someone else speaking, for any length of time): Ah, I thought there was a funny smell around here. So they dug you up again.

SIR WILKIE: By gad, you young whippersnapper, I'll thank you to stop making jokes about my being dead.

RUDOLPH:

My daddy-in-law's so nostalgic,
He lives all his life in the past,
Though he's getting quite old and neuralgic
He thinks that it always will last.

Oh, he lived in the garden of Eden
But Sir Anthony played his cards wrong,
And the garden of Eden wants weedin'
And the past just can't last very long.

SIR WILKIE:

I know that I'm just an Edwardian
When all of the world knew its place.
My life was once rather a gaudy un,
And I think the new world's a disgrace.
You could ride in the old first-class carriages,
And the people there were quite first-class,
Now we get these hypergamous marriages—
Oh, things are in a terrible pass.

MIMI:

Oh, my husband's a mine of hostility
And he's definitely not of my class,
But as long as he keeps his virility
I'll let his vulgarities pass.
My father's an old sado-masochist,
He approves of the lash and the birch;
He tells me about all the things I've missed
But I'll leave the old chump in the lurch.

MIMI: Listen, Rudolph, doesn't it seem to you the glow has left our marriage, that what's missing is *bonhomie*, *gemütlichkeit*?

RUDOLPH: Ge what lick height?

MIMI: Mut, Rudolph, mut. You have all the fun, pulling funny faces, getting hot and angry. Well, I'm tired of



"For a Rep Company they certainly put on a good cup of tea."

slaving my fingers to the bone over a hot cove. I want you to read this. (*She hands him, reverently, the copy of McCall's. The stage fills with men from the Gas Board, who have come to read the gas-meter, which is upstage, covered by the Panamanian flag (to reduce taxation), and with I.R.A. men, singing:*

In a class-gear'd society
Milk does not go in first;
Of all the social crimes there are
That surely is the worst.
For class mobility is all
And he who slips is curst
In a class-gear'd society
Milk does not go in first.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *The same, one week later, but with print curtains, flower arrangements, candelabra and all the trappings of those Batchelor's Soups advertisements. RUDOLPH and MIMI are finishing dinner; they smile at each other.*

RUDOLPH: Darling, what a wonderful dinner. I've always wanted to try ferret.

MIMI: And real Irish sherry in it, too, hic.

RUDOLPH: Good old Syllabub. Great Scott, it's nine o'clock. Time for me to buss you on the back of the neck again. That is, if you really want me to.

MIMI: Oh, I do, Rudolph. It seemed rather dirty at first, but I'm growing to like it. Isn't life wonderful?

RUDOLPH: Thanks to the women's magazines.

MIMI: Yes, thanks to *McCall's*.

Oh, we went for walks in the pouring rain,
And we nursed each other to health again.
I've bought a car and we crash it often,
My husband's ire with food to soften.
And we kiss each other on the neck
Whenever we feel our life's a wreck;
We devote ourselves to togetherness
Whenever we feel our life's a mess;
We devote ourselves to gemütlichkeit
All the day and most of the night.
Our wedlock's the finest you've ever seen
Thanks to a woman's magazine.

RUDOLPH: Now off to my typewriter.



MIMI: Rudolph, I sold it . . .

RUDOLPH (*suddenly beside himself, which makes two of him, a sad prospect for everyone*): Are you mad? How is an artist to live without a typewriter? Nobody wants artists. It means you starve. (*He yatters on in this vein for several minutes.*)

MIMI: I bought food with it, Rudolph. I love to eat; we always used to eat, back at home.

RUDOLPH: I'm sorry I lost my temper. It's this infernal anger, clawing at my mind.

MIMI: I read to-day there's a new organization called Angries Anonymous. As soon as you feel it coming on you just telephone, and John Osborne comes out and talks to you till you get over it.

RUDOLPH: I'll call them to-day.

MIMI: And I was thinking. I'm tired of these dreadful old provinces. Let's go to London.

RUDOLPH: But I've always loved the provinces.

Ah God, to see the branches stir
Across the moon, at Manchester,
To smell again that river-rotten
Effluent from the dyeing cotton.
Oh take me back to the L.S. Lowry-
World where life is rich and flow'ry,
Back to the land of Wilfred Pickles
And good old Northern slaps and tickles,
The girls are sweet, the chaps are pally
And not too far away's the Hallé.

MIMI (*waving McCall's*): Remember togetherness.

RUDOLPH: Let me finish.

But all of that is too disturbin'
For a man so clearly urban.
Provincial life is much too cloistered,
I must be wined, dined and oystered,
Drinking all the latest drinks,
Slinking all the latest slinks . . .
Live among the high society,
Conduct myself with impropriety,
Kiss the girls with such a merry air
Pinch them on their London derrière.

Yes, we'll go.

MIMI: I knew you'd understand.

RUDOLPH (*a gleam in his eye*): Mimi, you're a wonderful woman. Let's play earthworms and antelopes.

MIMI: Or wolves and carrion.

(*They begin their favourite game. The gasmen and I.R.A. men enter and sing with a will "The Bells of Hell Go Ting-a-Ling-a-Ling" and Brendan Behan steps up from the audience as*

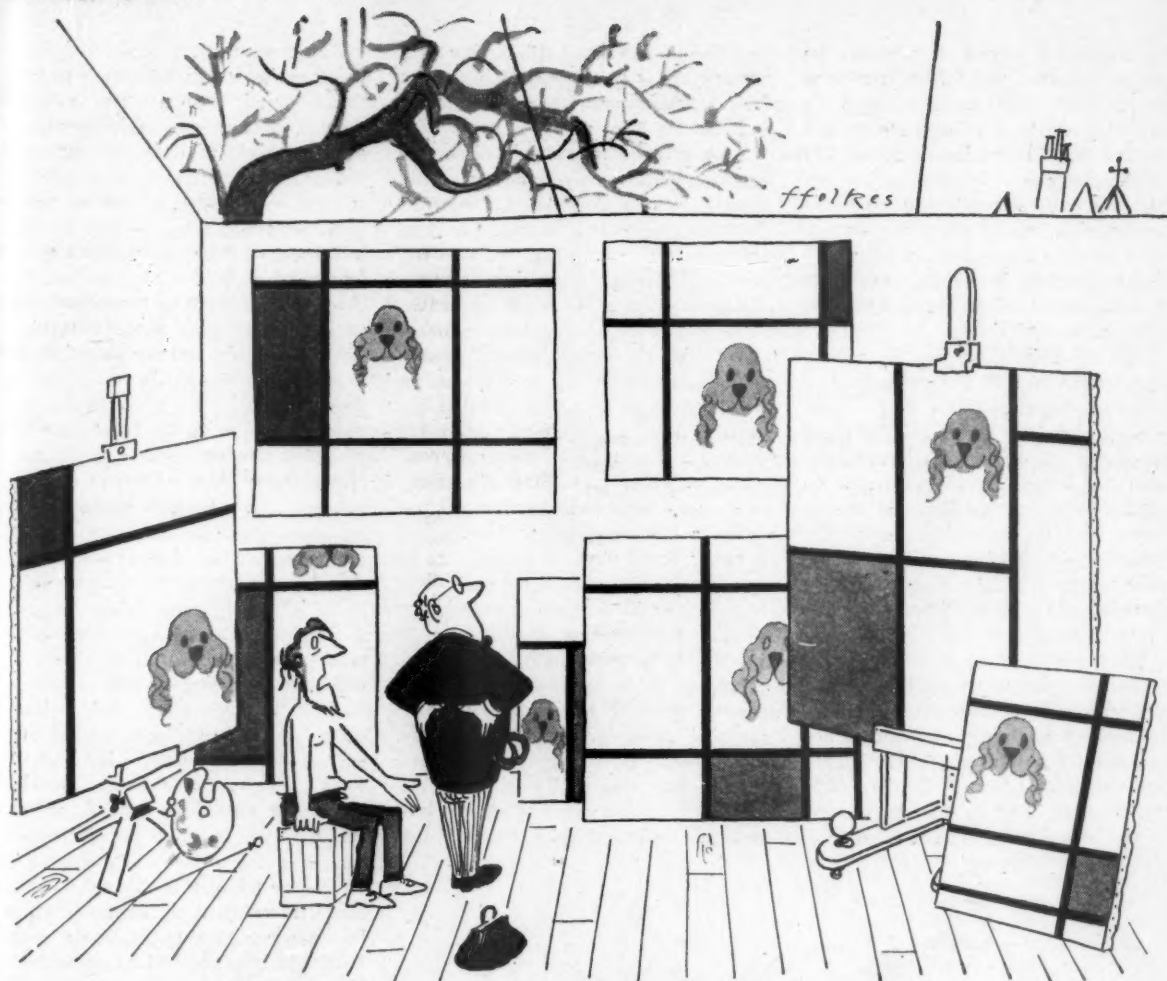
THE CURTAIN FALLS)

☆

"Elizabeth Taylor, the film actress, to-day lost the title role in 'Cleopatra' . . . She said that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, to whom she is under contract, insisted that she must first appear in a film called 'Butterfield' . . . 'I refused for two reasons,' Miss Taylor said. 'First the script—the leading lady is almost a prostitute . . .'"

Daily Telegraph

Which film is she talking about now?



"Frankly, doctor, I'm worried."

Very Small Noises

By H. F. ELLIS

NOISE, particularly intermittent loud sounds heard unexpectedly, causes an increase in the respiration rate. The pulse is quickened and the blood pressure raised.

Noise also produces spasm and contraction of the stomach.

Workers with pneumatic drills often have impaired hearing . . . Experiments have shown that typists in noisy surroundings lose fifteen per cent of their efficiency . . . With all the noise in the world to-day, it is small wonder that, as a race, we have become irritable and touchy and have lost the good manners of an earlier and more dignified age.

I borrow these observations about

noise from Sir Walter Hannay, chairman of the Noise Abatement Society, not with any idea of contesting them or belittling the aims of his admirable Society but simply to add a small and perhaps rather personal rider. The noises that Sir Walter is against are loud noises. Traffic noise, aircraft noise, diesel engines, tube trains and rattling railway carriage partitions were among the inflictions he mentioned in a recent address to the Women Public Health Officers' Association. We shall become, he told them, if this hullabaloo continues, "a race of shouting maniacs."

He also made the compelling point that if the noise level were sufficiently

reduced our national efficiency would rise to a point at which none of us would have to pay any income tax.*

My only complaint is that he said nothing whatever about very small noises.

The people next door have a climbing rose on their fence, to which they have attached a small metal label probably bearing (though the point is immaterial) the inscription "Albertine." When the wind is southerly the label tinkles. It is not the kind of noise one could conceivably complain or go to law about

*Sir Walter said he had been told this "by an economist," which is as near to absolute certainty, I suppose, as one can get in this world.

but I reckon it reduces my efficiency by twenty per cent when I am trying to work. When I am trying to sleep my efficiency drops a clear hundred per cent. I would rather have a Boeing 707 overhead any day. I would even rather have a mouse behind the skirting-board or Polonius behind the arras or any other scratchy thing that you can throw shoes at. There is nothing you can do about a metal label except lie there and wait for the next tinkle.

The susurrance of pens on writing paper when women are corresponding raises my blood pressure after a time. It isn't only the noise but the sheer speed of it—the sense of bustle and haste as if the fate of Europe depended on getting the recipe that the other woman wants into the pillar-box before the last collection. Knitting needles, despite their urgency, aren't nearly as bad; there is nothing secretive and excluding about them as a general thing.

Some people make a curious, quiet golloping noise when swallowing tea. Or rather, it is not exactly at the moment of swallowing, as far as one can judge without getting an Adam's apple fixation, but a fraction of a second afterwards; so that one is often misled into thinking that it is going to

be all right this time. Sir Walter says nothing about this when talking about how irritable and touchy we have become.

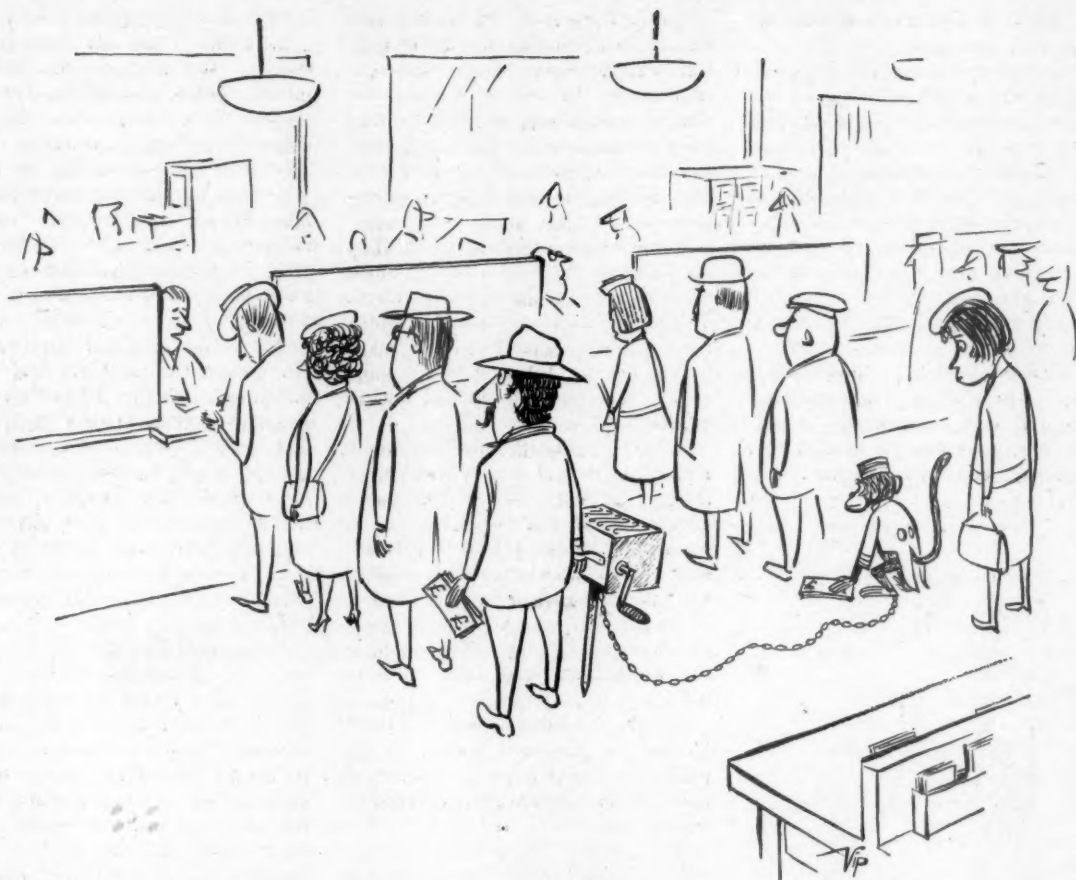
Among other very small noises that produce spasm and contraction of the stomach I should like to mention dripping taps, the sound of hens shifting their feet about on roosting perches, all kinds of crunching, crackling and splintering noises made by people eating sweets in trains or treading pieces of coke into the carpet, and any sudden small clatter upstairs, such as that made by a toothbrush dislodged by a flapping curtain from a bathroom windowsill during a pause in "Panorama." I particularly dislike the effect of a bristly or scrawny neck being turned sharply inside a stiff-wing-collar. The sound is rarely heard now, of course, but in an earlier and more dignified age I used to put my hands over my ears whenever Neville Chamberlain appeared on a newsreel. Sparrows in ivy reduce my efficiency, as do clicks in gramophone records and the faint rattle of early morning tea being taken into somebody else's hotel bedroom when I have forgotten to order it. I also dislike the hiss made by the inrush of air into air-tight tobacco tins, if heard unexpectedly.

The terrible thing about very small noises is that it may take hours to track them to their source. That is never the case with pneumatic drills or diesel engines. One of the most damaging noises I ever heard—damaging to my respiration rate, that is, and my future good manners, and so on—took me from midnight till one forty-five a.m. to localize, as I could tell by the bedroom clock whose ticking had kept me awake until this new noise started. It was a kind of slither, intermittent, as Sir Walter Hannay would say, but so nearly inaudible that I had to sit up in bed to hear it at all. If I had been in a grass hut in West Africa I should have said it was a black mamba in the roof, but this was a friend's house in Lincolnshire where no such easy explanation was available. I don't mean to say that I was at all frightened by it. But a noise is a noise, and when he can't account for it a man's natural instinct is to search about until he finds the cause, fix it or plug his ears as the case may be, and get some sleep. Some people may be able just to plug their ears in the first instance, but then, as Sir Walter said in his speech, mankind is divided into three groups, the insensitive, the sensitive and the hypersensitive, and I happen to belong to whichever group it is that has to track small intermittent slithering noises to their source. I had to go out on to the landing, in this particular case, before I found that a pellet of tissue paper was being rotated anti-clockwise inside an open hatbox by a downdraught from a skylight. That is not the kind of explanation that can be deduced by simply lying in bed and exercising the reason.

Now here is the Chairman of the Noise Abatement Society on noises at night: "Though the volume of traffic is less at night," he observes, "we are more conscious of door-slamming, back-firing of motor bicycles, revving up of cars and everlasting leave-takings of thoughtlessly noisy convivial individuals." Exactly. When the mighty over-all roar of daytime diminishes, lesser but not less agonizing noises come into their own. I doubt whether Sir Walter has considered the full implications of this. When his Society has hushed the clamour and the bangs to which we are accustomed, a whole range of tiny rustling and whispering sounds, unheard till now, will assault our ears.



"—Eventual self-determination—make haste slowly—brotherhood of man—this great continent stretching its limbs—peaceful co-existence—the dawn of a new era."



The beating of my neighbour's heart will nightly quicken my own. The tiny thud-thud of insects' feet may well reduce the efficiency of country typists by twenty or thirty per cent. What then?

The Very Small Noises Abatement League, of which I expect to be chairman, will set itself very limited objectives. I do not believe it is possible by legislation, agitation or other means, to prevent mice from scampering about in old houses or stop thoughtless hosts leaving pellets of paper in hat-boxes under open skylights. What we shall aim at will be the production of a low continuous nationwide hum, of about two decibels, monotonous enough to be, in time, unnoticed but loud enough to drown the stealthy creakings, tickings and susurrations of the new silent Britain. Perhaps the projected commercial sound-radio service will provide the answer.

The Perfect Hostess

By PATRICK SKENE CATLING

I WOULD be one of the first to acknowledge that I am probably the worst guest between San Francisco and Kowloon (the long way around); I like Martinis, but Martinis don't like me. What I was prepared to defend, however, until very recently, was my resilience as a host. I used to doubt that there could possibly be anybody readier with a philosophical chuckle to accept the usual concomitants of domestic hospitality in modern London, the emotional ups and downs, the breakage, the stains. But now I must concede that there is somebody

whose knowledge of the difficulties of entertaining makes my own trials seem trivial. I refer to Daphne Fielding, the former Marchioness of Bath.

She recently posed a quiz about a dinner party supposed to help readers of the *Sunday Express* to decide what sort of hostesses they were, and even now that my copy of the paper has been incinerated I cannot stop brooding about the questions and answers. After a lot of careful study I have at last worked out what sort of group Mrs. Fielding's "perfect hostess" had gathered together that evening, how they must

have passed the time, and what absolute hell it must have been.

I have not been able to decide exactly what the perfect hostess looked like, but as she possessed "the radar-like intuition of a bat, the sensitive antennæ of a butterfly, the reactions of a racing motorist, the tact of a diplomat, the marshalling powers of a general," I imagine her short-sighted but splendid, athletic and authoritative, with science-fictional Martian tendencies.

In addition to the hostess, there were seven diners: "a courting couple," "a shy and silent stranger," "a celebrity," "a conversation hog," "a devout Roman Catholic," and "a foreign guest." There are some more characteristics for attribution: there was someone who

lied, someone who was unruly, someone who cheated, someone who was clumsy. I know it may seem a bit hard on people who cannot help being British, but chauvinism compels me to attribute all these nastinesses to the "foreign guest," who must have been quite a shocker for Mrs. Fielding to have kept his nationality secret.

It seems that they all arrived half an hour late and the soufflé intended as the first course was consequently ruined. The perfect hostess, whose first act at more than one moment of crisis was to button her lip, typically said nothing at all and quickly whipped up an omelet.

When the wine was served the perfect hostess discovered that it was corked and she had no other. I can see the guests with glasses upraised and their mouths arranged to receive the first sips when the perfect hostess realized that the wine must not be tasted. Moving at her customary high speed, she removed it at once, without any explanation, and served beer or water.

The shy and silent stranger was being ignored by the other guests, so the perfect hostess concentrated on him as much as she could have concentrated on anyone just then.

The perfect hostess heard a guest (the foreigner, I assume) falsely claiming acquaintance with the celebrity, and the celebrity (whom he actually didn't know) overheard the remark. The perfect hostess pointed out the celebrity to the boaster.

One guest was hogging the conversation. Instead of silently showing boredom or trying to shout him down, the perfect hostess, to use Mrs. Fielding's paradoxical but picturesque imagery, egged him on until he ran dry.

Another guest—probably one of the lucky ones who had been served beer—became unruly. The perfect hostess neither showed him to the door nor grinned and bore it; she simply crossed him off her list. I suppose her list was a long one, heavily scored.

The perfect hostess felt that one of the guests (the fiancée?) was a bad influence on another (the fiancé?) but nevertheless "made the party go." The perfect hostess discouraged the stronger one by some means apparently too gruesome to disclose. In fact, the perfect hostess must have discouraged everyone who was still hungry, I should think, because at this point, strange to relate, the meal was suddenly interrupted for a game of cards.

Employing her bat's intuition and butterfly's antennæ, no doubt, the perfect hostess soon perceived that one of the guests was cheating. She engineered a pretext (she was also quite a technician) to end the game at once—evidently by announcing that the time had come to introduce some of the guests who still did not know one another.

The perfect hostess was not so busily engaged in this tardy formality that she was unable to tell a woman friend that she had lipstick on her teeth.

It was hardly surprising to read that



one of the guests, very likely the hog that had been egged dry, started smoking. The perfect hostess refrained from keeping him company by lighting up herself—an exhibition of salamander prowess that would, I agree, have been in the poorest of taste. She “pointedly” passed him an ashtray.

By now the perfect hostess already quite understandably felt that the guests were staying too long, so she suggested a nightcap. I deduce that the nightcap contained gravy—curious, this, because the menu had been meatless, in deference to the Catholic. I know that there was gravy about after the meal though, because the clumsy guest spilled some of it on the perfect hostess's dress, which had been, until that time, her best one. The perfect hostess said it did not matter but immediately went upstairs to change.

As the gravy had caused so much

trouble, the perfect hostess, making a final effort to save the evening, produced a decanter of port. As one might have feared, the foreigner, “unacquainted with English customs,” passed it around the wrong way. The perfect hostess refused to let it pass.

“Is it the custom in your country to pass port anti-clockwise?” she asked him.

His reply was not recorded, but I dare say that it transcended the language barrier. I imagine he said something to the effect that if this was perfection he would settle for something less, any old day.

I shall remember the perfect hostess the next time one of my guests starts running amok, and the memory, I am sure, will make me grateful for any small mercies that may ensue.



“Butterfingers.”

Mind that Split Lip

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

WITH only a hundred and twenty-three laughing days to the Summit this seems a good time to look at the top-level political joke, the kind that has U.N. men slapping their thighs and falling about the Delegates' Lounge. A good specimen escaped under the curtain by way of a Hungarian magazine the other day, finding sanctuary in the *Daily*

Telegraph. The Big Four Foreign Ministers (it seems) went on safari and shot a lion, which Gromyko guarded while the others went for transport. When they got back there was no lion. “Where is the lion, Gromyko?” they asked. And Gromyko said “What lion?”

Well, I don't know the circulation of this Hungarian magazine, or what they pay for material of this kind, but the humour market is narrowing these days and the gagman has to look ahead. My politics are a bit shaky, but the fun's still there. What about these, for a kick-off?

Mao Tse-tung, Chiang Kai-shek and Chou En-lai were ski-ing on the nursery slopes of Fujiyama one Sunday when Chiang Kai-shek said “Look, you two stand still about ten yards apart and I'll do the slalom round you.” Chou En-lai agreed, and Mao said “Why do you indulge him, he isn't even a Communist?” Chou replied, with a wink, “And Fujiyama isn't a Chinese mountain.”

Nasser invited Nguib to look over the site of the well-known high dam (I can't remember its name). “We're going to hold more water in this thing,”

boasted Nasser, “than was displaced by all the ships sunk in the Canal at the time of Suez.” Nguib sucked on his pipe for a minute before replying. At last he said “I daresay. But you still won't get a cent out of Ben-Gurion.”

A Gettysburg postman was finishing his round with the mail when he realized that he had a letter for President Eisenhower that he had forgotten to deliver. Dutifully he turned round and retraced his steps, only to meet the President coming towards him with an empty golf-bag slung over his shoulder. “Hi,” said the postman. “Hi,” returned Ike. “Any mail to-day?” “Sure,” said the postman. “Anything for me?” (N.B. The great trap here is working in something corny about the President's Gettysburg address.)

Khrushchev and Mikoyan (two Russian statesmen) were bicycling through Siberia when they came across Malenkov and Shepilov fishing. Khrushchev dismounted and crossed to the river bank. “What's the fishing like, Comrades,” he said—“better than in Moscow?” “Much better,” replied the anglers. “Why don't you join us?” “I wish I could,” said Khrushchev, “but how do I know someone won't steal my bicycle?”

Dr. Nkrumah was attending a piano recital in Naples when the manager of



the concert hall announced that Vesuvius was in eruption, and that anyone who wished to leave should do so now; the performance would then continue. Everyone left but Dr. Nkrumah and the man in the next seat. "Excuse me, Excellency," said the manager, "but may I ask why you do not leave with the others?" "You may," replied Nkrumah, "provided that you address any remarks through my personal detective."

Lord Home, Mr. J. R. Bevins, Mrs. Castle and Lady Violet Bonham Carter were skin-diving in the Adriatic when a huge lump of . . .

Oh, well. You can finish that one. My vein's worked out for the moment. That isn't to say that a decent offer from any Hungarian editor won't set me digging for a few more pure gold nuggets.

☆

"If a mid-Victorian were suddenly transported back to his old haunts in Britain to-day, what would strike him most strongly . . . Not motor cars . . ."—*Birmingham Mail*

Like to bet?

For Those with No Head for Heights

Tinned mountain air from Australia is now on sale at one-and-sixpence a whiff.

FAR from his Toowoomba home, a Queenslander, on coming in,
Breathes that mountain-top aroma
(On the level!) from a tin.

Mountain-dew has long been bottled,
Why neglect the airy crown?
Need we lowlanders be throttled
If they *can* convey it down?

Might we not (or would it gas us?)
Whiff the fabled empyrean
Of Olympus—from Parnassus
Might we not inhale a paean?

Might we not expand our tunics
With some rarely vacuous boon
Brought to earth by Russian luniks
From the mountains of the moon?

Though if cooler men succumb—it
Can be blowy there—we might
Find some windbag from the Summit
Set the ruddy world alight.

—J. A. LONDON

Man in Apron by *LARRY*





New Look for Zoos

By R. G. G. PRICE

ALL advances in human ingenuity quickly become tedious. Once the mere existence of zoos was a wonder. Now we yawn as we read about yet another creature born in captivity, or about new designs in neo-concrete that will bring spectator and animal closer than ever, while still remaining safely apart. A good handout sometimes becomes accurate retrospectively and it is in the humble hope of making news from the zoos brighter in the future that I diffidently suggest a few lines that the go-ahead zoo might take.

With the decline in wild life, soon the only natural habitat for many animals will be zoos. The naturalistic zoo of the future will, instead of showing its creatures on Bedfordshire pampas or in Kentish lagoons, show them in zoos. Zoos themselves have become subject to the law of evolution and consist largely of cafeterias, first aid stations, offices for the director's staff and collecting-points for lost children, so that buildings and lay-out have edged cages into the background. The go-ahead zoo will have to accept the challenge and present its sloths hanging

from signposts saying "Bookstall" and its zebras peering from the windows of the typists' pool.

Habitat has, after all, become a convention. A parrot may have been captured in a subtropical forest but is there any reason why it should never delight the public in anything else? Of course not! Why should not zoos experiment with cross-habitation and have monkeys swinging on pines and lions in tulip fields and giraffes on imitation icebergs (warmed of course) and stick-insects on the kind of rocks where you find molluscs? Picking somewhere inappropriate and stimulating for the chameleon would be a real test of the director who is on his toes.

Zoos' popularity with visitors is gradually being rivalled by the popularity of stately homes. This is a challenge that Woburn has met by having animals in the grounds; but can it stop there? The zoo of the future may well be actually inside a stately home. The trippers will follow the guide as he directs attention from the portrait of the Fourth Earl to the albino raven perching above it, as he first switches on the light over the tapestry

bust of Charles II and then lifts the lid of the Wedgwood tureen to reveal the piranhas. A platypus is interesting enough on a river-bank, but how much more interesting in a ducal bedchamber. In the chapel there would be a notice forbidding visitors to sit in the Family's private pew or to feed the tapirs. In the stable there would be an inspiring mixture of bison, antelope and okapi. In the artificial ruin, where in the eighteenth century there lived a hermit, would now be flying-foxes.

Once one has got away from the traditional form of zoo the possibilities are, well, considerable. There could be a zoo on and about an Atlantic liner, with marmosets on the davits and a chimp at the captain's table. There could be a zoo, a carefully selected zoo, in a night club. And how many possibilities there would be in a combined zoo and maze.

There is already one game which includes a quadruped—polo. It would be a much better spectator-sport with a wider selection of mounts. Almost certainly water-polo in a swimming-bath is an inferior spectacle to water-polo in a bath-sized aquarium, especially one with a range wide enough to include turtles, lobsters, swordfish and electric eels. I am not suggesting, of course, that the rules could continue without amendment.

Similarly with drama. An open-air theatre with a properly stocked wood or ranch or farm would hold its audience through even the dullest speeches. *As You Like It* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would be enormously improved by the active presence of small mammals. Jacques' melancholy would be more convincing if you saw him being attacked by hornets. (Equity would be unlikely to allow carnivores.) Bottom in his asinine period could be joined and made much of by llamas and yaks. Revivals of *The Importance of Being Earnest* would be given elegance by a wide variety of small, overfed pets, perhaps swaddled in Beaton-designed jackets. The more experimental type of director might try setting *Death of a Salesman* in an aviary or *The Glass Menagerie* in a glass menagerie. And surely *Tristan* would pass more quickly for the semi-musical if the singers were mounted on elephants and a skilfully chosen selection of creatures sported round the elephants' feet.

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W.O. Code No. 56789.

BALLISTIC MISSILE FIRING DRILL

PAMPHLET No. 4 (Revised)

Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Mk IV

1961

Prepared without the knowledge of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

THE WAR OFFICE,
January, 1961

General

1. The purpose of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile is to hit the enemy for six.

2. The weapon has an accuracy of plus or minus 200 miles. Its trajectory is subject to Droop, Jump, Drift, Boggle and Clatter. Allowances for these are incorporated in the Celestial Co-efficient at the time of firing.

3. There is a built-in Asiatic Correction for all missiles with a point of impact in the Eastern Hemisphere. A Middle East Atmospheric Compensation automatically operates when the missile passes Longitude 15E.

4. An Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Group can function with full efficiency only if:

- The war diary is maintained up to date at all times;
- There is no smoking on the launching pad.

Preparing for Action

On the order "Prepare for Action," by the Forward Firing Officer (F.F.O.), No. 1 doubles his detachment to the rear of the missile dressing by the right.

The F.F.O. orders "Tell Off," and the detachment numbers smartly. Any man uncertain of his number will be doubled six times round the launching pad.

The odd numbers insert ear-plugs in the ears of the even numbers, and vice versa.

The F.F.O. orders "Take Post."

2, 3 and 5 remove the polythene cover from the missile, and report "Cover Off." 8 and 9 pick up all elastic bands and remove them to storage.

4, 7 and 10 wind up the desiccators.

6 hands chalk to 12, who mounts to the warhead and inscribes on it the Message of the Day. 12 returns chalk to 6.

11 delivers the Meteor Telegram to the F.F.O., who orders the F.F.O. Ack to work out the Celestial Co-efficient. The F.F.O. then adjusts the fourth vernier of the overdrive.

1 ensures that the master gyroscope is functioning freely. He then reports "Ready for Action."

If tactical situation permits, cocoa is served to all ranks.

Counting Down

The final figures will be read in this order: Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, zero.

On the word "ten," 2, 3, 5 and 7 slacken the tommy-nuts retaining the gimbals by one quarter-turn.

On the word "nine," 1 orders "Detachment Rear."

On the word "eight," Army Form G9099, fully completed, is handed to the Quartermaster, who now ceases to hold the weapon on charge.

On the word "seven," the F.F.O. switches on the red light.

On the word "six," the detachment double away behind the blast walls, except 13, who reports to the F.F.O.

On the word "five," no action is taken.

On the word "four," 13 ensures that his right thumb is functioning freely.

On the word "three," 13 poises his right thumb above the firing button.

On the word "two," all Other Ranks sit to attention.

On the word "one," the F.F.O. salutes the missile.

On the word "zero," 13 pushes the firing button, using normal digital pressure.

In the event of the missile taking off the F.F.O. reports "Missile Away."

If tactical situation permits cocoa is served to all ranks.

Misfires

Order or Report	Given By	Given To	Action Taken, If Any
"Misfire" "Blast!"	13 F.F.O.	F.F.O.	F.F.O. Ack repeats Not repeated by F.F.O. Ack
"Press Button Harder"	F.F.O.	13	13 presses button again, using maximum bodily force.
"Change to Percussion"	F.F.O.	1	1 returns to missile and kicks it smartly above the gimbals. If it still fails to respond, the following procedure will be adopted:
"Something Wrong"	1	F.F.O.	F.F.O. Ack orders, "Say, 'sir,' when you address an officer."
"Stand Clear"	F.F.O.	1	1 returns to his detachment. They remain behind blast walls for 30 minutes, telling off and changing round. After 15 minutes an artificer releases the screw retaining star-board inspection panel and the Propellant Inspection Officer agitates the tickler of the tertiary fuel pump. If no hissing sound is heard, the following action will be taken:
"Remove Warhead"	F.F.O.	1	The warhead is removed, wiped clear of chalked messages and disposed of in accordance with ACI 187/1959 as amended by ACIs 865/1959 and L4/1960.
"Rest"	F.F.O.	1	1 doubles away his detachment to attend Chaplain's Half-Hour.

Amendments

I.B.M. Shorter Manual, 1960. Page 217, lines 4-5: delete "get the hell out of it" and insert "retire to prepared positions."

Page 234, line 17: delete "apples" and insert "nipples."

Page 235, line 2: delete "bismuth" and insert "azimuth."

Page 301, line 30: after Para 2 add: "3. Haversack rations will not be consumed at the control panel."

Page 305, line 5: delete "4 and 5 will loosen their stays" and insert "4 and 5 will loosen the stays retaining."



Diagram in azimuth showing factors governing the flight of an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

Although it overshot the target, this missile ended accurately on course.

Distribution

C.-in-C. Home Forces.
School of Nuclear Warfare.
Shetland Port Officers.
Military Mission to Saudi Arabia.
Vice-Admiral of the Nore.
Director of Public Prosecutions.
W.O. Time and Motion Directorate.
Masters in Lunacy.
Gathered Wool Officer, Bradford.

The French for P. G. Wodehouse

By RICHARD USBORNE

POKING round bookshops on holidays in France, I have found no French versions of *Finnegans Wake* or the poetry of Dylan Thomas. But much of Wodehouse has been translated. And, as I have long thought Wodehouse must be, of modern writers in English, the third most difficult (elusive allusion) to put into any other language, I bought *Jeeves, au secours!* (Amiot-Dumont, Paris), the translation, by Denyse and Benoit de Fanscolombe, of *Joy in the Morning*, my favourite Bertie/Jeeves novel. *Bref*, as the French say, and in Bertie's own words, the story is "the super-sticky affair of Nobby Hopwood, Stilton Cheesewright, Florence Craye, my Uncle Percy, J. Chichester Clam, Edwin the Boy Scout and old Boko Fittleworth . . . or, as my biographers will probably call it, the Steeple Bumbleigh Horror." (. . . *cet embrouillamini ou . . . pour prendre la définition qu'adopteront probablement mes biographes . . . l'horrible drame de Steeple Bumbleigh auquel furent mêlés Nobby Hopwood, Stilton Cheesewright, Florence Craye, mon oncle Percy, J. Chichester Clam (sic), Edwin le Boy Scout et ce vieux Boko Fittleworth.*)

I determined to make a depth-analysis of the translation as soon as I discovered that "Shropshire" becomes *Skropshire* in French. That may have been a misprint . . . the word appears only once in the text. But I must take it as it comes, e.g., *chez Droles* for "at the Drones" and variously *Catsmeat Ploter-Pirbright*, *Potter Pirbright-tête-de-mou* and *Potter Pirbright dit Tête de mou* for "Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright." (*Mou* is the French for butcher's lights.)

The essence of the Wodehouse prose-style, at its fizziest when Bertie is the narrator, is the use of tremendously vivid slang and imagery, plus a babu-maggie juxtaposition of:

- (a) jargon phrases from a number of different trades (e.g., the Law, horse-racing, boxing);
- (b) quotations from:
 - (1) The Bible
 - (2) Shakespeare
 - (3) Verse that Wodehouse learnt either for recitation as a boy or from putting it into Latin Elegiacs at school; and
 - (4) trash-literature of the women's magazine or Hollywood silent film caption varieties
- (c) scrambled syntax (e.g., "I took a thoughtful morsel of kipper"); and
- (d) a pin-headed muddling of the One and the Many (e.g., "It's a small world, Jeeves. I don't know when I've known a smaller" and "It seemed to him that Judgment Day had set in with unusual severity").

SLANG

Let's see how the Fanscolombes cope with some of the slang and imagery in French. You might like to paste this list into the back of your Michelin Guide for your next travels in France.

That will bring home the bacon	<i>ça rabibochera tout</i>
A nice bit of box-fruit, what!	<i>une belle mélasse</i>
To give the little snurge (Edwin)	<i>flanquer au maudit galopin une</i>
six of the best with a bludgeon	<i>volée de martinet</i>
To mince yourself to hash	<i>se faire hacher la viande</i>
My dear old soul (Jeeves)	<i>mon petit vieux</i>
The beasel (Florence Craye)	<i>la pécore</i>
A girl liberally endowed with	<i>une fille amplement pourvue de</i>
oomph (Nobby Hopwood)	<i>chien</i>
Oofy	<i>pourvu de galette</i>
A flop	<i>un loupé</i>
A bloke	<i>un zèbre</i>
A sterling chap	<i>un crac</i>
A bearded bozo (King Edward	<i>un bonze barbu</i>
the Confessor)	
Acts of Kindness (as enjoined to	<i>des B.A. (bonnes actions)</i>
Boy Scouts, daily)	
Everything is gas and gaiters	<i>ça gaze à bloc</i>
To write stinkers (letters)	<i>écrire des engueulots</i>
To go to the mat and start chewing	<i>être en bisbille et commencer à</i>
pieces out of each other	<i>se dire des "cacheries"</i>
(lovers' quarrel)	
To dot him one	<i>lui en coller un dans la figure</i>
A bottle from the oldest bin	<i>une bouteille de derrière les</i>
	<i>fagots</i>
To zoom off immediately (for	<i>faire un départ à l'anglaise sur</i>
fear of Aunt Agatha)	<i>le champ</i>
The bean (head)	<i>le chef</i>
The napper (head)	<i>la cafetière</i>
The onion (head)	<i>la caboche</i>
To thrash that pie-faced young	<i>rosser, à deux doigts d'en</i>
warthog Fittleworth within an	<i>crever, cette face de tarte,</i>
inch of his life	<i>cette jeune verrue de Fittle-</i>
	<i>worth</i>
His eyes popped out of his head	<i>ses yeux étaient hors de la tête</i>
and waved about on their	<i>et erraient de-ci, de-là au</i>
stalks	<i>bout de leur tige, le nerf</i>
	<i>optique sans doute</i>
He realizes that dirty work is	<i>il se rend compte qu'une</i>
afoot at the crossroads and	<i>vilaine besogne est en train</i>
that something swift is being	<i>de s'accomplir et qu'une</i>
slipped across him	<i>peau de banane va lui être</i>
	<i>incessamment lachée dans</i>
	<i>les pattes</i>
You bloodstained (Bertie)	<i>espèce d'ignoble individu</i>
You horrible young boll-weevil	<i>espèce d'horrible grain de</i>
(Edwin)	<i>charançon</i>



You outstanding louse (Bertie) *espèce de vermine*
 You degraded little copper's nark (Edwin) *infecte petit rabatteur de police*
 You blasted object (Bertie) *espèce de détrit*
 To spot oompus-boompus *mettre le doigt sur les manigances*

He loved like a thousand of bricks *il était amoureux comme pas un*
 I shall probably play on the old crumb (Lord Worplesdon) as on a stringed instrument *je jouerai probablement sur les fibres de cette vieille noix comme sur un instrument de cordes*

We Woosters can read between the lines *nous, Wooster, savons lire entre les lignes*
 Toodle-oo *bye bye*
 Pip-pip *bye bye*
 Her Ladyship (Aunt Agatha) *Madame la Baronne*
 Butler *maître d'hôtel*
 Butler *valet de chambre*

QUOTATIONS

"Odds boddikins, Jeeves," I said, "I am in rare fettle this a.m. Talk about exulting in my youth! I feel up and doing, with a heart for any fate, as Tennyson says."

"Longfellow, sir."

"Or, if you prefer it, Longfellow. I am in no mood to split hairs."

"Jeeves, je suis dans une forme rare ce matin. D'une jeunesse triomphante, pourrait-on dire. Je me sens d'attaque; nul arrêt du destin ne saurait étonner mon courage comme dit Tennyson."

"Longfellow, Monsieur."

"Bon, bon, Longfellow, si vous aimez mieux. Je ne suis pas d'humeur à couper les cheveux en quatre."

"It reminded me of those lines in the poem—'See how the little how-does-it-go tum tumty tiddly push.' Perhaps you remember the passage?"

"Alas, regardless of their fate, the little victims play," sir."

"Il m'a rappelé ce vers du poème 'Vois jouer les pauvrets, pom, pom, pom, dix, onze, douze.' Peut-être vous rappelez vous le passage?"

"Vois jouer les pauvrets sans souci de leur sort," Monsieur."

"I don't know if you remember the passage? 'Ti-tum-ti-tum ti-tumty tum, ti-tumty tumty mist (I think it's mist), and Eugene Aram walked between, with gyves upon his wrist.'"

"Je ne sais pas si vous vous rappelez le passage: 'pom, pom, pom, pom, sous la pénombre (je crois que c'est 'pénombre'), Eugène Aram fut emmené, les fers aux pieds, quel drame sombre!'"

Even though the French translators put gyves upon Eugene Aram's feet instead of his wrist, it is nice to see them making up a little poetry of their own.

But other items of licence are less easy to accept. Why do the Fanscolombes (husband and wife or brother and sister) make Lord Worplesdon an armaments magnate, where Wodehouse makes him a peaceful shipping magnate? Why... well, you remember that Lord Worplesdon, much to Bertie's surprise, called for champagne in his study at 10 a.m., and made Bertie celebrate with him? In Wodehouse's version Lord W. is brought two half-bottles in succession, and he and Bertie share them to the dregs. In the French it is two whole bottles. The thrifty Wodehouse would never waste two bottles of champagne on two people at 10 a.m. without staging one of his excellent tipsy scenes to follow. And anyway Lord W. is going to get royally plastered that very night on dance champagne (the French ignores that important pejorative "dance," incidentally) at the East Whibley Fancy Dress Ball. And, thirdly... next morning, when Lord W., still dressed as Sinbad the Sailor with red whiskers, comes fuming to Boko's cottage, Boko and Nobby, trying to cool him down with some breakfast, offer him sardines several



times. In the French it is always fried eggs that they offer him. Why? Are sardines impossible for a French *petit déjeuner*?

An inadequacy similar to the missing "dance" before "champagne" is a missing "cooking" before "sherry." When Bertie first introduced his untidy friend Boko to Jeeves, Jeeves wilted and retired to the kitchen, "doubtless to pull himself together with cooking sherry." The French simply says *avec un petit verre*. And the Fanscolombes sadly underplay that best of all Wodehouse images. Bertie had come on that great oaf Stilton Cheesewright nervously buying an engagement ring for Lady Florence Craye in a Bond Street jeweller's. Bertie very properly prodded Stilton in the trouser-seat with his umbrella.

... He spun round with a sort of guilty bound, like an adagio dancer surprised while watering the cat's milk.

The French says:

... Il se retourna d'un bond avec l'air coupable d'une danseuse classique surprise à tirer la queue d'un chat.

Why a feminine dancer? And why pulling a cat's tail, not watering the cat's milk? One raises the eyebrows and purses the lips. And,

NOBBY: "You've known Boko so long, Bertie."

BERTIE: "Virtually from the egg."

French:

—Vous connaissez Boko depuis si longtemps, Bertie!

—Pratiquement, du jour où les flancs de sa mère l'ont porté.

One passage of involved allusiveness the Fanscolombes don't translate at all. They simply leave it out.

It was many years since this Cheesewright and I had started what I believe is known as plucking the gowans fine, and there had been a time when we had plucked them rather assiduously. But his attitude at the recent get-together had made it plain that the close season for gowans had now set in.

Then, here, surely, the Fanscolombes think that "betcher" is a term of endearment:

"He has long chafed at the rottenness of motion pictures, and is relying on me to raise the standard," said Boko.

"You will, angel," said Nobby.

"You betcher," said Boko, swilling coffee.

... *Ilest furieux de l' inanité de leur production là-bas (Hollywood) et il compte sur moi pour en hausser un peu le niveau.*

— *Et vous réussirez, mon ange, susurra Nobby.*

— *Poupée de mon coeur, gargouilla Boko, lampant son café.*

Twice they get the wrong ideas about drink. In the first, misled by a Shakespeare quotation, they put drink in where it is not intended. In the second they leave it out where it is intended.

Lord Worplesdon, tight and tired, had been sitting out from the East Whibley Fancy Dress Ball in the back of Boko Fittleworth's enormous car. He had fallen asleep and Boko, not knowing he was there, had driven home and parked the car in the garage and locked the garage.

"Driving away at the conclusion of the recent festivities, Boko must inadvertently have taken Uncle Percy with him. He had sped homewards with a song on his lips, and all unknown to him, overlooked while getting a spot of tired Nature's sweet restorer in the back of the car, the old relative had come along for the ride."

A l'issue des récentes festivités, Boko avait dû ramener oncle Percy dans sa voiture, sans s'en rendre compte. Une chanson sur les lèvres il avait dû foncer sur la route du retour et oublier complètement celui qui l'accompagnait, grâce aux lampées du généreux cordial qu'il avait toujours dans sa voiture pour donner éventuellement un coup de pouce à la Nature.

And in the following "the raw spirit" certainly means alcohol, not courage and innocence. Boko's plan had been for Bertie to go charging into Uncle Percy's study at 10 a.m. and to start ticking him off and calling him names: Boko then to appear and defend Uncle Percy, thus winning Uncle Percy's favour, so that he, Boko, could marry his (Uncle Percy's) ward, Nobby. And Boko had typed out a sheet of offensive things that Bertie had to say to Uncle Percy at this early-morning interview:

Typewritten, with single spaces, I suppose the stuff ran to about six hundred words, and of all those six hundred words I don't think there were more than half a dozen which I could have brought myself to say to a man of Uncle Percy's calibre, unless primed to the back teeth with the raw spirit.

Tapé à la machine, à interligne simple, le texte devait faire, je pense, à peu près six cents mots, et sur ces six cents mots, je ne crois

qu'il y en ait eu plus d'une demi-douzaine que j'aurais pu me forcer à dire à un homme du calibre d'oncle Percy, à moins d'être farci jusqu'aux dents de courage et d'innocence.

But these are details. In the hotel where I was staying in France was a Belgian whose English was perfect but for a slight trace of accent. He told me his French was better, so I gave him *Jeeves, au secours!* and said "Have a look at this and tell me whether it gives the Wodehouse impression in French. And if so, well or very well?" Without opening it, he said, "I will read it. But it cannot be very good, for two reasons. First, there is no equivalent for the Wodehouse layers of slang in French. There is no upper-middle-class comparable to the English public school type, and French student slang is regional and changes much too quickly. Anyway French is a Latin language. In German and Dutch you'd probably find that Wodehouse translations were feasible in the same idiom. But not in French. The second reason is this . . . I have never heard of the Fanscolombes, which probably means they are not *littérateurs* in their own right. Translation is such a badly paid profession that, if you do it for a living, you've got to do it quickly. Even if Wodehouse could be done into French at all, he certainly could not be done quickly. The best hope would be to get some rich man who for a hobby would pore and polish, pore and polish for years. If the Fanscolombes were that sort, I would have heard of them, and I haven't. My guess is that this will be a journeyman production and uninspired." He spent half an hour with the English text, and then half an hour with the French. Then he said "No, they haven't got the spark. This translation is just a translation. It is what the French call '*gris*' . . . grey, lack-lustre, a journeyman job. And '*Skropshire*' is a misprint."

I wouldn't know. The Belgian probably would. But for a quick test of his guess that Wodehouse might go into German in the same sort of idiom, I compared the first paragraph of *Leave It To Psmith* with its German translation (*Psmith Macht Alles*, translator Heinrich Fraenkel, published by Kiepenheuer and Witsch). The English reads:

"At the open window of the great library of Blandings Castle, drooping like a wet sock, as was his habit when he had nothing to prop his spine against, the Earl of Emsworth, that amiable and boneheaded peer, stood gazing out over his domain."

The German reads:

Am offenen Verandafenster in Schloss Blandings stand Lord Emsworth und blickte sinnend auf seine weiten Domänen.

That's all. Would you say Herr Fraenkel had wrung the last drop of meaning out of the English into the German?

☆

A Materialist MacMillennium

THE creed of the Materialist

Is aphoristic, neat,
Proclaiming *Man ist was man isst*,
Or, Men are what they eat.

Those MacMaterialistic sneers
Sound therefore slightly hollow;
All politics depend, one fears,
On how much men will swallow.

— E. V. MILNER





"Believe me, you're not missing much."

Old Crocks' Calendar

By MICHAEL GREEN

I HAVE a motoring calendar on my desk, the sort in which you tear off a fresh page for every day. At the foot of each page is a little hoot of advice, seasonably if read in season.

"Now is the time," tweets the calendar, "to prepare for those cold winter mornings. Is your starter motor in good order?"

Such advice rings hollowly in the ears of one who owns a pre-war car powered by eight old and worn-out horses. Mind you, I shall check my starter. It is at present stored under the front seat, but for a long time I have toyed with the idea of tying it under the bonnet. Alternatively I could buy a leather strap to stop it swinging, and drive with the starter sticking out of the bottom of the radiator, as the old lorries used to do.

My other starter (the electric one) is an interesting device. When the knob

is pulled a yard of wire comes into the car and the starter motor delivers itself of a loud braying noise, like a crowd of Conservative women demanding the return of flogging. This, however, does not turn over the engine, so I have to use the handle.

"Make sure that your lights are ready for winter's darkness and fog. Check that they are all working properly and that the dipping mechanism is effective."

The only light on my car which works is the interior light. This never fails to function—indeed it is sometimes difficult to switch it off. The other lights work according to this formula:

Upon switching on side and tail lights, one tail light goes on intermittently.

Upon switching on the headlights a thin spiral of blue smoke arises from the nearside mudguard and a smell of

burning comes from under the dashboard. No light of any sort is visible.

Upon pressing the dip-switch the offside headlight comes on to full beam and swivels so that the beam is concentrated in the faces of oncoming drivers.

(This effect is rather interesting, because it gives the impression of some lunatic motor-cyclist careering down the road.)

Upon slamming the driver's door the interior light goes out. Upon slamming the passenger's door the interior light goes on. This is completely reliable.

"Check your battery carefully. It will have much work to do this winter, and a flat battery will mean you cannot start."

That is just sheer nonsense. A flat battery never stopped anyone from starting if they used their brains. As

from October 1, I simply park on a slope. I'm surprised that the chap who wrote the calendar hasn't heard of that one.

"Fill your radiator with anti-freeze and top up regularly once a week."

What a humorist the man is! The only time I ever put anti-freeze in my radiator it sought out and found every hole in the water system. There was anti-freeze (at about £5 a quart, or whatever they charge) squirting out of thirty different holes like the water in the fountains at Leamington Spa (or is it Cheltenham?). Anyway, it all squirted out.

Personally I always put a few spoonfuls of mustard powder in the radiator during winter. I have no idea what this does, but I have never yet had a burst radiator, so it must be effective.

"If you do not put in anti-freeze, drain your radiator every night."

There is no need for me to do this. If the car is left by itself for more than eight hours the water drains away automatically through a special outlet valve known as a leak.

"Check the roof, and all windows, doors and joints, for leaks through which rain might penetrate."

I have a much simpler method than this. I just drive in an old felt hat when it is raining. The roof leaks like a sieve, of course. I have three spare hats for passengers. It looks rather gay having four people in a car all wearing old felt hats, particularly if one or two of them are women.

There is, however, one leak which appears to be peculiar to my car. Whenever I go through a puddle a solid

jet of water shoots up through the floor beside the handbrake and goes straight up my trouser leg. For this reason I always wear one bicycle clip when it is raining.

Sometimes people say to me "Why are you wearing one bicycle clip?" and I reply "Because I am driving the car," and they make clicking noises and shake their heads and mutter, but it is not as silly as it sounds; you just have to wear a bicycle clip if your car has a hole round the handbrake.

N.B.—The clip should, of course, be worn on the left leg. An alternative is to wear one Wellington boot.

"Change to a thinner oil as recommended by your garage."

My garage never recommend me to do anything, except to sell the car (not to them—they won't have it). There is, of course, no question of changing to a thinner oil. The bearings are kept in place only because I use an oil so thick that it is nearly grease.

"Is your car heater working properly? During the months of disuse in the summer dust may have affected the mechanism..."

My car has its own internal under-the-floor heating system worked off the exhaust. In fact it is the exhaust. As a heating system it is first-rate, although as an exhaust it leaves something to be desired, because the fumes tend to concentrate inside the car. Indeed it got so bad at one time that we thought of taking a canary with us, like the miners. However, the rear window has since been broken, so there is adequate ventilation.

I feel it is time that pre-war car owners got their own motoring calendar. We don't want all this highfalutin stuff about changing oils and filling up with anti-freeze. We want something practical. How about this:

November 1: Renew string holding on spare wheel.

November 2: Check piece of toy building outfit on running board.

November 3: Tie flashlight on back of car in case of lights failure.

November 4: Check that fire insurance is in order.

November 5: Encourage small boys to play with fireworks near car.

The final entry for next year would of course be the day before official tests begin on old vehicles.

"Park car on bomb site and run."



"Fancy bringing kids."

Ici on parle Français-Américain

(Sign on a Florida beach)

MR. MAURICE MANDEVILLE
Had fled in his pink sedan de ville
South toward the sun from a cold and drear
January season at the Hotel Pierre,
And was all tired out
From the strains of the route:
He had come a long way.
Maurice drove up to the porte-cochère
Where the doorman (formerly with the Palace)
Took down his valise,
Smiled—professional care-destroyer!—
And conducted him across the foyer.
Girt with credit by his bank,
With American Express, Diners' Club, carte blanche,
Maurice is established; the clerk now blooms
And fits him to a suite of rooms.

Forty bucks,
Super de luxe.
Decorator colors above, below, behind, around, before,
Authentic, decorator-designed décor.

In trunks Hawaiian, in beachrobe cherry,
Over slight baldness placing a béret,
Maurice revived, feeling less than his age,
Arms himself to essay the *plage*.
It's crowded. He's forced to scrounge
Around to find the promised chaise-longue . . .
But now!—through his unfreezing flesh a thrill
Courses, to see *en déshabillé*
Nymphs by the ocean-front foot-frisky
He feels, not to say risqué;
Far less would have made far stronger men tremble
Than the circumambient ensemble:
Pink toenails, tan tummies, a topaz rear,
Maximum exposure, minimum brassière . . .
And one particular nymph, named Doris,
A-lounge in the chaise that borders Maurice.

Did he begin to strain at the leash?
He did (excuse the cliché).
And Maurice directs his avid gaze
On Doris, who is looking anything but blasé.

(Evening) . . .

Seating them companionably, the dapper chief
Waiter suggests an apéritif.
Next, menu-frowning, his brow a veneer
Of doubt, Maurice debates the sole meunière,
But after a magisterial fuss
Decides, for both, roast beef *au jus*.
"Do you care for salad?—then I've
"Just the thing, tomato with endive."
Maurice commands; glittering near
Tinkles the chain of the sommelier;
Their glasses placed, into them flows
Thin red trickle of vin rosé . . .
Her eyes were starry, her fingers gemmy,
When Doris lifted up her demi.

The evening's all before; the pick
Of supper-clubs awaits the chic
After-dinner clique . . .
Careless Florida hours to fill . . .
They choose the Deauville.
As Doris says, "It's just a block,
"And so baroque."
And so it is. A politic wooer,
Maurice orders a liqueur
(Instead of booze
A green chartreuse
For her; for him, with thoughts demoniac,
A cognac).
Chairs just touching . . . "She's so unlike,"
Maurice reflects, with glance oblique,
"The usual type." "I really feel,"
Dreams Doris, "he's my beau idéal."

And now a singer, as if in pain,
Sings disconsolate songs about the Seine,
And starry nights, and mountain dew,
Till the lovers return to the Fontainebleau . . .
Let's bid them good-bye
Without further adieu.

— E. W. NASH





Steel and the Dollar

THE settlement of the American steel strike provided the appropriate and highly significant opening to the economics of the New Year. First thought it arouses is that only a country of immense wealth could shrug off an eight-months' steel stoppage as the United States have done. The steel workers themselves must be members of a very affluent society indeed to have been able to stick it out as they have done.

Secondly, there is the paradox that the strike of 1959 has made certain of the boom of 1960. Stocks of steel and of articles made of steel have been run down to precarious levels and must now be replenished. The pent up, unsatisfied demand for motor-cars, dishwashers, steel girders, *et al.*, will dominate the markets in the months ahead. This new year will be one in which all production and consumption records in the United States will be broken. In this context what is good for the United States will be good for the whole free world. Larger quantities of tin, copper, rubber, diamonds, will enter the open maws of American industry and that will be a very good thing indeed for many countries in the sterling area.

The third thought about this settlement is that despite all the protestations from the employers that they were fighting the battle of a stable dollar, the settlement is unquestionably inflationary. It will cost the industry close on \$1,000 million a year and it will probably set the pattern for another nationwide round of wage increases. This in its turn will affect the U.S. balance of payments and the pressure on the dollar, on which related topics the debate will wax fast and furious in 1960 (probably to the benefit of gold shares).

Finally—and this is where the repercussions of the settlement really get home—the probable increase in steel prices in the United States will further improve the already strong competitive position of the British industry. As Sir Ellis Hunter has recently told Dorman

Long shareholders, and Mr. Harald Peake those of the Steel Company of Wales, British steel in various types is being sold on the eastern and western seaboard of the United States. It can be delivered at prices which evidently bring good profits to the manufacturers in this country, and which cannot be touched by the home-made product.

The British steel industry looks back with relief on 1959, uttering one sigh for deliverance from the political nightmare of renationalization and another for its ability to shake off the recession that gripped it in 1958. On the political theme, let the final verdict lie with Sir Ellis Hunter, that man of few but usually decisive words. "A year ago I remarked 'The great majority of the people in this country have no desire for any further extension of state ownership of industry. If the general election were to be fought on the question of renationalizing steel it is certain the country would reject it.' These observations were confirmed



Ghost of a Crow

HE was very proud-looking, our Sussex cock, and his crow, full-throated and penetrating, could always be distinguished from our neighbouring cock's, a hoarse and shabby echo.

All too soon his pride turned to aggression. He had the walk of a portly brigadier strutting into his club and enforcing recognition. Every morning he would run round eight or nine of the hens in circles; he was six months old when he started to encircle me.

It was primitive, alarming, this encircling ritual. The cock is often used in the symbolism of native Africa, its significance threatening, and I began to fear this menacing creature with his ritualistic dances and vigilant eye.

Our new pullets laid their eggs in inaccessible nests about the yard and these were sometimes lifted by small boys from the village. One Sunday our rooster chased a ten-year-old until, in terror, he was at last forced to lock himself into the meal-house; he could

by the result of the election and there is no need for further comment."

The steel companies whose reports have been published recently, including, apart from Dorman Long and Steel of Wales, South Durham and United Steel, show how well these companies withstood the tribulations of 1959 when at one time the industry must have been working at less than 70 per cent of capacity. Last year 20 million tons were produced and this year that figure is likely to be raised to 24 million tons, with a continuous increase to 30 million tons by 1965. This expansion is in large measure the result of a grinding and valiant effort of self-financing, since about two-thirds of the capital cost is being found out of current profits. Lots of ordinary shares are beginning to look extremely expensive. For the long-term investor most British steel shares represent an investment in success, which will continue to do well for their holders.

— LOMBARD LANE

see the cock waiting for him outside, its golden eye on him, ready for another onslaught. Three workmen mending the barn roof were attacked so viciously that they were forced to run up their ladder; the cock was becoming a dictator.

He would have to go. After dark he became sleepy, settling on his perch, and stealthily my husband approached, took careful aim with an air-gun and fired at close range. Nothing happened. The pellet, hitting him in the neck, made no impression. The next shot started him flying, angry at the disturbance but not incapacitated. It took three-quarters of an hour to kill that cock.

He lay, his feathers for the first time dirty, limp under the rain. A fallen clown in the floppy red-and-white garments, the animated eye now masked. I was sorry, then, to think I'd never again be woken by that clear, proud crowing.

We shan't tell anybody he's dead. We'll keep up the legend of the warrior cock—small boys who go into the farmyard do so at their peril, remember how he chased young Jimmy until he could run no farther, he's the devil, he is, and don't forget it. And if somebody says "I haven't heard your old cock lately," we'll remark "Yes, he's growing quieter," and perhaps one day they will hear the ghost of a crow.

— P. ELLIOTT

Toby Competitions

No. 96—Collapse of Stout Party

READERS are invited to compose a Victorian-type caption (title, at least two and not more than six lines of soliloquy or dialogue, stage directions optional) for one of the following drawings in this week's issue: Langdon, p. 82; Scully, p. 85; Scully, p. 105; Jackson, p. 111. The point need not be that intended by the artist.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, January 22, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 96, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 93

(Brokers' Men Welcome)

Pantomime parodists went wholeheartedly for Dr. Barbara Moore, whose long-distance walking seemed a turn-up for the Dick Whittington book. Competitors found it hard to fit a traditional tale into a modern setting in the admittedly meagre space available, and those who had good ideas did not always succeed in dressing them with the time-honoured trimmings. The most authentic ring was achieved by:

E. O. PARROTT
47 DAVER COURT
CHELSEA MANOR STREET
S.W.3

for the following:

SCENE—A SUPER-MARKET

VERY IDLE JACK: Did you ever hear the story about the two dustbins? You didn't? Well, there were these two dustbins, a male dustbin and a female dustbin, and they were writing a play about a coffee-bar that fell in love...

(Enter Dame)

DAME: Hullo, girls and boys. Now I want you and I to have a little secret. Every time I come on, I shall ask you a question and I want you all to shout: "I am."

VERY IDLE JACK: I am trying to tell a story.

DAME: That's all right. You're not interfering with me—I hope. Now, off I go...

VERY IDLE JACK: These two dustbins lived in a little sewer in Sloane Square and...

DAME: ... and back I come. Now, then, kiddies. Who's in favour of family planning?

(Cries of "I am," "Dig that," "Old stuff," "Square," etc.)

VERY IDLE JACK: ... and the play got transferred to the West End and the East End...

(Enter Dick and his Cat)

DICK: Here we are at last, Puss. All the way from Edinburgh with only an odd glass of water and two hours sleep a night. Oh, my poor feet!

PUSS: Miaow!

DICK: Now to do our Christmas shopping. Hey, there!

V.I.J.: ... and they went on a tour of the U.S.A. and wrote a book about that too.

DAME (Re-entering): Now kiddies. Who's in favour of more Lone Ranger?

Book tokens to the following:

A Lad in Trouble

SCENE: Street. Enter Parker, a Motorist.

PARKER: Alas! Alas! Alack-a-day!

They've gone and towed my car away!

You'll always find the cops are copping,

When you are busy with your shopping.

(Enter six Policemen, hauling on rope, which finally produces toy car.)

POLICEMEN: Our job's to tow your car away,

In case the Law you don't obey:

It's much more wearing to the feet

To have to dig a crazy beat.

PARKER: It's funny being in the Pink,
When your luck is down the sink.
The fault is clearly Marple's Zone
That I beneath these parcels groan.

(Fairy Policewoman flies in, aided by invisible wires.)

This member of the Flying Squad
May get the Beak to spare the rod.

FAIRY POLICEWOMAN:

As Fairy Godmother, 'tis my view
Your car should be restored to you.

(A flash: puff of smoke. Bubble-Car comes up through trap-door.)

J. P. Pinel, 67 Horn Park Lane, Lee, London, S.E.12

Slowly the House that Jack Built dissolves. In its place, seen through gauze, darkly rises a high mountain. Two figures are standing on the summit.

MAN: "My Fair Lady!"

(Gives olive branch to woman.)

THE WOMAN IN WHITE: "Oh! K.!"

Roger Till, 14 Western Hill, Durham

Book tokens are also awarded to:

G. J. Bhundell, Littlewood, East Malling, Kent; A. Donald Abbott, 30 Vibart Road, Yardley, Birmingham, 26; F. J. Lelièvre, 1a College Avenue, Londonderry; A. W. Puleston, 17 Denziloe Avenue, Hillingdon, Middlesex; The Rev. Thos. N. Clark, The Manse of Petty, Dalcross, Inverness; Mrs. S. J. Fitzgerald, 38 Rawlinson Road, Southport, Lancs.

THEN AS NOW

Du Maurier had already been on the staff of *Punch* for ten years, but it was another ten before his most famous episcopal joke, the Curate's egg, appeared.



HAPPY THOUGHT!

Ambitious Wife of his Lordly Room. "I wish you'd go on a STARRING TOUR IN AMERICA, MY LOVE, AND TAKE THE CHAIR WITH YOU! IT WOULD BE SUCH A SUCCESS! THERE'S NO OTHER CAT TOUCH GREY, YOU KNOW—AND YOU'RE QUITE THE HANDSOMEST OF THE ENGLISH BROTHERS!"

December 4 1893

Give Mom a Break

IF you move into an American town or suburb you must be prepared for a great deal of coming and going in the home. In fact a continuous stream of glorious life will flow round, about, and in at your doors from morning till night.

The first and most welcome invader will probably be the "Welcome Wagon." In our case the snow from the boots of the removal men had hardly had time to melt on the nice new parquet before this most charming lady had arrived. In a short speech of welcome, seated gracefully on a packing case, she told us about the amenities of the neighbourhood. And she left behind her a sheaf of vouchers from the local stores, entitling us to get something from each, *free*, in order that they and we might get acquainted. A delightful idea! (Nothing remotely like it happened when we moved to the Watford area. There you had to seek out the shops for yourself and wait, like everyone else, for the assistant to turn round.)

Next to arrive will be various batches of little girls, around knee height, who lisp about baby-sitting. When they first came to me I thought their mothers were looking for someone to sit with them, until I realized that *they* were the prospective sitters. Twenty-five cents an hour before midnight, and fifty after, was what they were charging then.

Then come the salesmen. The first lot, probably in droves of three or four a day, will be those selling fly-screens and storm-windows. You have to have these things in America as a protection against flies, storms, and salesmen for fly-screens and storm-windows. Once you have bought some they will stop—but there will be plenty of others. Vacuum cleaners, of course, pressure cookers, television, magazines . . . Their technique varies from the bullying "You're a sucker not to buy this. Don't want to be a sucker, do you?" to the pathetic "Just one more sale to-day, ma'am, and I can buy me a winter overcoat."

Perhaps the most time-consuming of all callers are the vendors of cultural backgrounds. Mine being female, I

FOR
WOMEN



thought she was another Welcome Wagon, rather late, and showed her, with great geniality, into the living-room. But alas!—it was encyclopædias. A full and sufficient cultural background could be bought, she said, for all kiddies whose parents cared for their welfare to the trifling extent of about ten cents a day for twenty years or so. Just one page of one slim volume a day, between school and TV—quite painless, lots of pictures, no tedious reading of all sorts of other books.

This lady came several times and tried every technique from "All the most exclusive people on the street are getting them" to the incredulous and reproachful "I thought *British* mothers *cared*" note on which she finally gave up.

When it isn't people at the door it's the telephone, asking what radio programme you are listening to, how many in the family eat corn-flakes for breakfast, or what is Grade Four's Social Studies homework for the day. Or it is

the neighbouring Moms and Dads, who roam the backyards at dusk in search of the tricycles, bicycles, dolls' carriages and other light vehicular traffic left somewhere about by their offspring during the day.

The American Mom gets a bad press nowadays, half the ills of America being laid at her door. But you see how it is? She may have lots of labour-saving gadgets, but when is she to start them in saving? As yet there is no gadget for "visiting" at the door, or for minding the kiddies. The marvel to me is how she manages to raise all those future little Beats and Bums and Walter Mittys and Catchers-in-the-Rye *at all* with so many distractions to contend with. And if she becomes a tiny bit bossy, or breaks out into compulsive club-joining in her middle-age, why not? She might just as easily go all crazy and mixed-up, like the kids. And *then* where would America be?

—FRANCES KOENIG

Family Tree

VERONICA said "Mother, have we ever had anyone famous in our family?"

"No, I don't think so. Hurry up, it's time for bed."

Veronica began to unlace her shoes. "To-day at school we had a geography lesson, and Elizabeth Anderson says that there's a mountain in Africa named after one of her uncles. Have any of my uncles ever discovered anything, Mother—have they?"

"No, love. Put your things tidily on the chair."

"Mother, you know the painting in the dining-room of a man with a beard

and a lace collar who is laughing? Well, is he one of my ancestors?"

"No."

"Isn't it awful not to have any important relations?" She turned and looked at herself in the mirror. "Mother, do I remind you of anyone?"

"I don't think so."

"I've often thought that I look like—well, Mary Queen of Scots, for instance. I'm very interested in history. What was grandmother's name before she was married?"

"Alice Graham."

"Oh. I thought it might have been Marlborough or something. Wouldn't

it be funny if I turned out to be related to the Queen? Elizabeth Anderson would be furious. Mother, was I born in this house or in a nursing home?"

"Come along now—here's your toothbrush. You were born in a nursing home."

"Mother, queer things happen in nursing homes sometimes. I was reading in the paper the other day about a lady who took home her baby and then years afterwards she found out that it wasn't hers at all. It had been switched. Mother, was there anyone famous in the nursing home when you were there?"

"No, love; rinse your mouth out."

"But Mother," Veronica protested, "how can you be sure? Important people don't always use their own name. Oh! Poor Mother—I know what you're thinking. You're wondering if I am your daughter after all. Don't worry, Mother, everything will be all right—but what if a duke turns up one

day and says that I'm his long lost grandchild? Will you be sad, Mother?"

"Yes, very. Put on your nightie and get into bed."

"I expect the duke will want me to go and live with him to gladden his old age. He's probably had detectives looking for me all these years. I noticed a man lurking outside the house last week. Try not to be unhappy, Mother. Perhaps I could come and stay with you once a year. Mother, will you close up my room and leave it exactly as it is to remind you of me?"

"If you like. Pass me your hot-water bottle."

"Here you are, Mother. I suppose I ought to get used to a warming-pan."

"Good night."

Veronica raised herself on one elbow. "Mother, I've been thinking. Perhaps I won't go to live with my grandfather after all. You and Daddy have been quite kind to me, and it wouldn't be

fair to leave you. I know—I'll renounce everything—my title and my inheritance. Would you like that, Mother?"

"That would be very nice."

Veronica sighed. "No one but you and me and Daddy will ever know that I am nobly born—unless you run into Elizabeth Anderson one day in town and happen to mention it to her casually. Mother—will you?"

— DOROTHY DRAKE

House Proud

YOU get the impression when you've gone

She'll go round everywhere you've been
Polishing what you've sat upon
And wiping thumb and foot-marks
clean:

Meanwhile you step as if on glass
And fear for every plate you pass.

— WILLIAM CLARKE



"How lovely, darling—but then you always do everything with flair."



BOOKING OFFICE

Larger than Life

Storm Bird. Edward Grierson. *Chatto and Windus*, 25/-

ONE thing that can be said for the rigidity of Victorian life—when it threw up an eccentric it did so in no mean way. Georgina Weldon was an outsize personality. To-day perhaps her extraordinary career would have been lost among the headlines; then a crowd of twenty thousand unhorsed her carriage at Peckham Rye, and she earned a cartoon in *Punch* to her own bat. Yet in spite of all the temptations of an impulsive nature she remained, it seems, virtuous, if not in the eyes of all her contemporaries entirely respectable. For this entertaining biography Mr. Grierson has had two main sources: her *Recollections*,

much touched up, and her journals, which have just become available and are terse and witty.

Born in 1837 of a good Welsh family, she was presented to the Queen, painted by Watts and became an *habituée* of Little Holland House; at twenty-three she married a patient and simple-minded hussar and settled down to enjoy Society. In a beautiful singing voice she had the key to any drawing-room. After ten years, dissatisfaction at so small an outlet for her energies drove her to revolt, and she started an academy for teaching young people her radical method of song; it was typical of her iron resolution that she disposed of her husband by forcing him to study heraldry, and six months later having him appointed Rouge dragon Poursuivant.

Soon after this *coup* she captured

Gounod; in flight from his family, he came to live with the Weldons for nearly three years. Georgina rejected his advances, though obviously in love with him. He was a convert to her singing method, and also to what his official biographers described as *l'usage britannique du tub*. He took her to sing at the Opéra Comique; together they trained enormous choirs, and when her benevolent tyranny grew insufferable they had tremendous rows, followed by blissful reconciliations. Even at mid-day he saw her surrounded by a white light, which was very flattering to her spiritualistic tendencies.

This episode over, her next stray cats were a less pleasant Frenchman named Anacharsis Ménière, the inventor of a hot-air, self-steering, self-navigating balloon which he kept in her garden, and his wife. At length her husband rebelled against her general imprudence, and sent mad-house keepers to kidnap her at dead of night. In scenes of the wildest melodrama she escaped; and flinging herself into the cause of Lunacy Reform, began the series of legal actions which brought her fame. Wholly unqualified but brilliant in cross-examination, she represented herself, dressed in a Portia outfit, becoming the terror of the private asylum-keepers and the pet of the nicer judges, who melted before her charm. At one time she had no fewer than seventeen actions going simultaneously, while appearing at night at several music-halls. Against Gounod she won £10,000 in damages, which were never paid. In the heat of the moment she was apt to exaggerate, and twice went to prison for criminal libel.

After this rich and fiery comedy she died poor, in 1913, adored by her friends as she had been by the London crowds. She had a genius for publicity before her time; she was the Pears Soap figure on all the omnibuses. Her radicalism was genuine, her kindness unstinted; her judgment was often clouded by her too active emotions. The Victorians were notably callous to their lunatics, and undoubtedly she forced reform on them. Watts's portrait shows a clever and

THESE LOOKS SPEAK VOLUMES

A Panorama of Publishers



17. JOHN G. MURRAY

STARTED opening the office post at 50 Albemarle Street, during the holidays, at the age of seven and has continued doing so till now except during educational and military interruptions. Sixth generation from the John Murray who found the Navy too dull and started the firm in 1768 on the money obtained from the sale of his commission. Great-great-grandson of Byron's publisher (Byron still takes up a good deal of his spare time). Great-grandson of Darwin's publisher. Became a partner in the firm in the 1930s when he started publishing the early work of Freya Stark, John Betjeman and Osbert Lancaster.

The list of books for 1960, largest in the history of the firm, includes new books by Professor Parkinson, Françoise Sagan and school books, and shows a catholic taste. Closely associated with *The Cornhill Magazine*, the centenary of which falls this year.

amusing face of great independence, and Mr. Grierson, writing with irony and affection, has brought admirable order out of a career of staggering confusion.

— ERIC KEOWN

LIVES OF THE POETS

Cider with Rosie. Laurie Lee. Hogarth Press, 18/-

This glorious book is an account of the author's boyhood in a remote Gloucestershire village. His numerous family were poor in this world's goods but rich in character, and Mr. Lee's portraits of them are as sharp as green apples. Mr. Lee is a poet, and realizes his memories with much beauty and wit; but he is also a very wise man, and his observations on juvenile delinquency (for instance) should be recited once a quarter at all juvenile courts and welfare organizations dealing with the young. Reading *Cider with Rosie* raises a glow of pleasure that persists long after the reading is done. It is a classic if ever there was one.

— B. A. Y.

Francis Thompson: Man and Poet. J. C. Reid. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25/-

Poor Francis Thompson! The gloomy epithet is inescapable. His life was a disaster: he drugged and drank, he suffered from tuberculosis, he was always without money and often a beggar. As for his poetry, Arnold Bennett thought he had "a richer natural genius than any save Shakespeare," but perhaps Lionel Johnson was nearer the mark: "Not the worst American newspapers have done more to harm the English language than Francis Thompson has."

Mr. Reid writes sensibly and with compassion. He claims that the visionary poems should really be called hallucinatory. Thompson was an opium addict, and most of his poetry was written during the painful hangovers after he had been deprived of the drug. However, the truth of his religious feelings is not in doubt. At the end of his life, they reached a new maturity, and his last poem is his best: *In No Strange Land*. He died in 1907, in poverty and obscurity, and the following year his *Selected Poems* was a best seller.

— P. D. S.

Bridge of the Brocade Sash. Sacheverell Sitwell. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 36/-

Readers of Mr. Sitwell's previous books will know just what to expect from this account of a recent trip to Japan, nor will they be disappointed. It is not so much a travel-book as a prolonged, leisurely and discursive meditation upon things seen, interspersed with snatches of reminiscence and odd, out-of-the-way bits of information (how many people know, for example, that Landseer's "Monarch of the Glen" was bought by Mr. Sitwell's great-grandfather for £30,000?). The description of places and works of art are as vivid and as evocative



"I can't walk any faster even if it is the M1."

as ever, though Mr. Sitwell's prose seems to have become looser and, here and there, more careless than formerly. He was especially fascinated by Kyoto, which he considers to be hardly inferior, as an art-centre, to Rome or Florence; yet one cannot help feeling that, beglamoured by sheer novelty, he tends to overrate some of the works which he describes. Nor does he quite succeed in communicating the charm of Tokyo which, for all his eulogies, sounds a remarkably dreary town.

— J. B.

OTHER NEW BOOKS

Voodoo in Haiti. Alfred Métraux. Deutsch, 30/-

This is probably the most comprehensive and well-informed book on the subject which has so far appeared. Dr. Métraux is not only thoroughly conversant with the history and literature of Voodoo, but has spent several years in Haiti, where his field-studies were greatly assisted by influential people with whom he became friendly, and under whose auspices he was accepted by the practitioners of the cult.

Voodoo is a syncretic religion, deriving from various African tribal cults imported in the slave-trading days; its rites sound sufficiently unpleasant, but in fact are not nearly so blood-curdling as some earlier accounts have implied. A most interesting chapter in the book traces the inter-relationship of Voodoo and the Catholic church: Voodoo practices are officially

condemned, of course, by the local priesthood, but are so inextricably mixed up with Christian ritual and symbolism that heresy-hunting becomes a difficult and delicate task.

This is a well-written and most intelligent book, translated with great competence by Mr. Hugo Charteris. The photographs are excellent, and in some cases distinctly alarming.

— J. B.

A Choice of Ornaments. Nicolas Bentley. André Deutsch, 25/-

The youthful Master Nicolas Bentley used to be discovered marking his books with gaily coloured chalks whenever a passage struck his imagination; and Mr. Nicolas Bentley still remembers "the effect of those tropical greens and acid pinks, those streaks of Parma violet, those hues of sunflower and geranium, that defaced the pages of my *Puss in Boots* and my *John Gilpin*." For the past ten years he has been writing and compiling *A Choice of Ornaments*, which

EXHIBITIONS

"Punch in the Theatre," Theatre Royal, Lincoln.

"Punch in the Cinema," Gaumont Cinema, Wolverhampton.

"Punch with Wings," Exhibition Hall, Queen's Buildings, London, London Airport Central.

is a charming and successful cross between an anthology of pet quotations, a book of essays, and a vivid self-portrait. Under such headings as *Early Years, Reading and Writing, Love, Philosophic Doubt*, Mr. Bentley tells us about himself and his preferences in reading, and the result is a very lucky dip. I was constantly looking up delectable quotations, and the only time I used blue pencil heavily was in the index (p. 349): how could Keats, a bachelor, write a letter to his wife?

— J. R.

"F.E." The Life of the First Earl of Birkenhead by his Son. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 63/-

This is a rewritten version with a good deal of new material. Although many eminent men began by detesting "F.E." and ended by loving him for his loyalty, gaiety and generosity, he seems now one of the most unattractive public figures in modern history. The wit is heavy-handed rudeness, the much-publicized brains never managed to understand the world he lived in and the boasts about rising from poverty to glittering heights sound empty when one remembers that his family could afford to winter in Egypt.

The biography is vivid and full of interesting oddments from behind the scenes but the narrative sometimes lacks definition. The end peters out, perhaps mercifully. He abandoned law and politics and found nothing left to believe in but money. His son hints that he wears best as a judge; but his current rating among lawyers is not particularly

high. Anyway, he certainly lives as a character. With the exception of Sir Winston Churchill, has any politician ever been less of a stuffed shirt?

— R. G. G. P.

The Spanish Town Papers. E. Arnot Robertson. Cresset, 21/-

Those who claim they would have liked to live in the eighteenth century should be made to read these papers, the siftings of a virgin cache found by Miss Arnot Robertson in the Old Armoury at Spanish Town, Jamaica. They are the assorted documents of nearly a thousand ships which came before the British Vice-Admiralty Court for adjudication as prizes during the War of American Independence. Neglected, worm-ridden and now only partly legible, they are a wildly romantic harvest, yielding all kinds of information about life in the sailing ships of the time, and including seamen's letters which never arrived.

The Court, of course, was abysmally corrupt, taking a large commission on the ships it impounded. One would like to have been told something of its members and how far they pretended to be honest, but perhaps they are too far sunk in oblivion. As sailor, scholar and enthusiast Miss Arnot Robertson was exactly the right person to get the most out of this exciting find.

— E. O. D. K.

CREDIT BALANCE

Your Obedient Servant. Sir Harold Scott. André Deutsch, 15/- Craftsman's son to boss of Prison Commission, London's Civil Defence, Ministries of Home Security



[Babes in the Wood]

Sally—ELVI HALE

Oliver—ERIC WOODBURN

Sir Rowland Macassar—FRED STONE

and Aircraft Production and, as described in earlier book, the Metropolitan Police. Amiable, modest account of development of Open Prisons, impact of Evans of the *Broke* on A.R.P. and similar excitements.

AT THE PLAY

Babes in the Wood (PLAYERS')

THE little Players' Theatre should earn itself a golden memorial for keeping alive the spirit of Victorian pantomime in a naughty world where the harlequinade is forgotten, and what is advertised as pantomime turns out to be either a music-hall jamboree or an American musical to which a bewildered fairy queen has been uncertainly introduced. The managers' objection to

REP SELECTION

Theatre Royal, Windsor, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, until January 30th.
Dundee Rep, *Murder On Arrival*, until January 23rd.
Colchester Rep, *Housemaster*, until January 16th.
Castle, Farnham, *French Without Tears*, until January 16th.

pantomime in the old sense is hard to understand, for this seems to have everything that children can possibly want. One is driven to believe that the target for Christmas entertainment is now mainly adult, and that the old label is retained only in the hope of bringing in a few disappointed innocents.

I am glad to report that even on a Monday night the Players' was packed with ecstatic neo-Victorians of all ages. This year the choice is H. J. Byron's *Babes in the Wood*, adapted by Maurice Browning; it was first performed at the Theatre Royal, New Adelphi in 1859—oddly enough, in July. In it villainy and virtue are gloriously embattled, and there are curious overtones of *Macbeth*. Sir Rowland Macassar, only half a bad egg, is loth to murder his brother's children, though they are blocking his inheritance; but Lady M., who would have been turned down flat by any marketing board, drives them out with a couple of hired assassins, and is so stricken by remorse that she drops into the old sleep-walking routine.

Needless to say, the senior assassin is really the children's father in disguise, and with the help of a fairy welfare unit not only are the infants' characters marvellously reformed but the whole painful affair is straightened out in the most friendly way. The script bristles with collectors' puns, to which Don Gemmell's production gives loving emphasis; and the harlequinade is so charming that once again one asks why it should be generally cold-shouldered. Both parts of the programme are mounted with taste and ingenuity by Reginald Woolley.

It is always fun to see a cast revelling

in its work as much as this one clearly is. There is gaiety, and a fair ration of voices. In a very tight selection I marked down for praise Joan Sterndale Bennett, Madeleine Dring, Fred Stone and Eric Woodburn; also Sally Chesterton, Yvonne Olena and Neil Fitzwilliam, who make a neat little ballet. And Sheila Bernette, who got a special mark for making me laugh more than anyone else did. She is small and impudent, and her timing and attack are so striking that surely she is a gift for revue.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Rosmersholm (Comedy—25/11/59), don't miss Peggy Ashcroft in this fine production. *One Way Pendulum* (Royal Court—6/1/60), funny surrealism. *Make Me An Offer* (New—23/12/59), lively cockney musical. —ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Our Man in Havana

NATURALLY enough, perhaps, the emphasis in the film of Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana* (Director: Carol Reed) is, still more than it is in the book, on making the whole affair "an entertainment." And the film is wonderfully entertaining, and often very funny. What gives it an odd individual flavour is the mixture of credible, admirably observed detail of character and scene and incident with moments and sequences of quite farcical exaggeration. It is arguable that these don't mix successfully, and in theory they don't—but this cast, under this director, working with this script-writer (Mr. Greene himself) could break more rules than that one without any ill effects.

There are some points even in the nominally "straight" passages that won't bear much examination. Mr. Wormold the unassuming salesman shows in one or two emergencies an altogether surprising dash and resource. Consider for instance the occasion when he goes at night to call on his old friend Dr. Hasselbacher, and there is no immediate answer to his knock at the door. Instantly, in a public—even though at the moment otherwise empty—street, he climbs up the front of the house and gets in at the window, just like that.

Nevertheless, as I suggest, this sort of thing doesn't matter once one accepts the piece as an entertainment, which is what the author meant it to be. It seems to me quite wrong to judge it too seriously, objecting (as some writers have objected) to the juxtaposition of characters of different "kinds." To be sure, "C" the dignified Secret Service man in London (Ralph Richardson) is an absurd and comic figure, hardly in the same world as Dr. Hasselbacher (Burl Ives), the good-hearted old German who is Wormold's best friend in Havana. And yet there is nothing literally incredible about him; it is conceivable that such a man could



(Our Man in Havana

59200, Hawthorne—NOËL COWARD

Wormold—ALEC GUINNESS

exist and behave like this in these circumstances, it isn't "against nature." To assume that characters who appear comic are somehow different in grain, in substance, from characters who don't is a fallacy; the difference is simply in the point of view. Moreover, "C" is quite a minor personage, only on the fringe of the story itself. It is delightful to be able to laugh at him in person, but any effect he has on the action could really be conveyed quite well in dialogue references by other people.

Wormold himself has elements of both the absurd and the ordinary, and I think Sir Alec Guinness makes him a thoroughly effective focus for the narrative. To suggest that he is able to give the character any real depth is to go too far; there was no real depth in it as written. Here is simply a man who, needing money to indulge the daughter he idolizes, allows himself to be enlisted in the Secret Service, and proceeds to justify his salary by turning in quite imaginary reports. These are taken seriously in London, where they do little harm; the trouble comes when they are taken seriously by the local police chief, and people Wormold has (quite falsely) named as his sub-agents begin to suffer for it.

So summarized, it might be a serious story, a straightforward thriller; what makes it comic is the comic vision, the comic invention and observation of detail, and the comic playing—though the outstanding acting performance is Burl Ives's as the old German doctor, not essentially a comic figure at all, because he is the one character seen, by the author, with sympathy. All the others are presented more or less superficially; the more superficial, the more comic.

I think too many people have started by assuming that a film with the great Sir Alec directed by the great Sir Carol ought to be something fine, impressive and important and must be sternly criticized if it isn't. This is like criticizing Joyce's limericks more severely than anyone else's; the point is not that they are by Joyce but that they are limericks. Here is something that was meant to be no more than an entertainment, and it undeniably is a very good one.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London: I would choose *On the Beach* (30/12/59) for two and a quarter hours of intelligent satisfaction. Others of interest are numerous and varied. Good French comedy and Italian comedy in the same programme, *Charmants Garçons* and *Persons Unknown* (both 2/12/59); very bright little British comedy, *Desert Mice* ("Survey," 23/12/59); a good tough, acid thriller, *Odds Against Tomorrow* (6/1/60); a Disney about the animals of the Arctic, *White Wilderness* ("Survey," 6/1/60); *Vicious Circle* (16/12/59), a version of Sartre's *Huis Clos*; remarkable pictures and too-pretentious words in *The Savage Eye* (25/11/59); the striking but uneven *Les Amants* (11/11/59); and, of course, *Ben-Hur* (30/12/59).

Of the releases there are three that I enjoyed, in different ways. *Expresso Bongo* (9/12/59) mixes the conventions of musical and straight comedy, but is full of very pleasing stuff; *The Horse Soldiers* (16/12/59) is a fine colour spectacular of the U.S. Civil War; and *Babette Goes to War* (25/11/59) is a very gay bit of Franco-British nonsense.

—RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE GALLERY

Look Back in Wonder

Italian Art in Britain

ROYAL ACADEMY (closes March 6)

THIS is an exhibition on a grand scale comprising 650 items, both paintings and drawings, and filling all the R.A. rooms—beautifully re-decorated for the occasion. Professor Waterhouse in an admirable introduction describes the theme of the exhibition: the connection of Britain with Italy, principally with regard to our collections of Italian paintings, but also with regard to pictures of Italy by Claude, Turner and Wilson, pictures of England, for example Badminton, and Warwick, by Canaletto, and, in addition, works in houses by "imported" Italian decorative painters such as Pellegrini and Verrio.

The novelty of the show resides in Francesco Guardi who must have done both the largest as well as the smallest canvases now at Burlington House. Many people do not know that Corot painted a picture of a man on a horse, and one of a man in armour (though the one is in the National Gallery and the other in the Louvre); he is for them once and for all the painter of misty lakes. And so it is with Guardi: he must always be the lagoon painter, runner-up to Canaletto. Thus, these gaily clad, somewhat operatic figures in the large canvases recently discovered in Ireland, all with the same swooning eyes, men, women, and children, coloured or plain, swooning from wounds of love or a rap from a melting sabre of blue ice, these will come as a surprise to many. They are done in a manner which Guardi once to some extent shared with an elder brother

Gian Antonio. Francesco subsequently dropped it and took to the work which we all know and of which No. 446 in the Architectural Room is a particularly lovely example, as is the minute *Capriccio* 437.

Works of the highest calibre in Room 3 include the well known Tintoretto from Hampton Court, Esther and Ahasuerus, very clean, in wonderful order; Sir Edward Hulton's Tintoretto, No. 88 (rather sombre); and Lord Harewood's Titian, No. 84, Death of Actaeon (in need of a wash). Leonardo's cartoon from the Diploma Gallery dominates a splendid array of drawings in the South Rooms; while at the far side of the Gallery are some exquisite primitives, some of the best of which are the proud possession of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.

— ADRIAN DAINTREY

ON THE AIR

Reconstruction Work

"**V**ERDICT of the Court," the Home Service series of reconstructions of famous British trials, is a clear example of how the limitations of steam radio work to its own advantage. Apart from the narration, which links episodes together and sets the ball rolling, hardly a word is spoken that does not come from contemporary documents; the trial usually occupies the last half of the programme; the speakers accentuate their roles a little, without often hamming them up. The thing is quite extraordinarily convincing.

One has only to imagine the same series on TV, done as well as you like, to realize how much the fact that one isn't given anything to see contributes to

this convincingness. The figures would posture in their ridiculous little box, the camera would soar about to liven up the angles, and each crime and trial would become a play, distinguished of course by the claim that it "actually happened." There is no need to make any such claim for the radio series, which wouldn't exist if it hadn't happened. The reality is everything, and first-class, twelve-inches-to-the-foot, solid-as-a-stone reality it is, though I sometimes weary a little of the stock BBC judge, patient, if querulous, and allowing his wise old thoughts to emerge very slowly in a high tenor through his nose.

I think I have noticed, over the series, a slight decline in fascination when the crime recorded is a comparatively recent one. The Gutteridge murder of 1927, for instance, did not have quite the impact of the trial of Thurtell and Hunt in 1824, though the Gutteridge case, with its sudden spasm of almost meaningless violence, had rather more significance for us to-day than the clumsy Regency murder. Perhaps the gambler Thurtell's character, still fierce and fascinating under the layers of time (very well done by Derek Birch) made an extra impact.

But I have noticed elsewhere how distance makes the facts seem stronger. "Scrapbook for 1910" is likely to appear a truer picture of a whole world than "Scrapbook for 1937." There are two extra reasons for this: the later years are apt to rely too much on personal reminiscence, an over-used and often unsatisfactory ingredient; and the more recent the events the stronger the BBC's subservience to the official view of them, or the reaction from it. Many years passed before the Establishment's attitude to the General Strike could be questioned, and I'm afraid many more will pass before it can be suggested in this type of programme that there was anything at all to be said for the bosses. Anyway, the Scrapbooks always make easy listening. I hope the Goons (back again, in pretty good form, though far too fond of jokes about what's going on in the programme) will do a Scrapbook for 1960.

Another thing I'd like to hear, perhaps when "Verdict of the Court" runs out of crime, is a similar series about Battles; there are a lot of reasonably well-documented ones, even though Lord Alanbrooke may not have been there.

— PETER DICKINSON



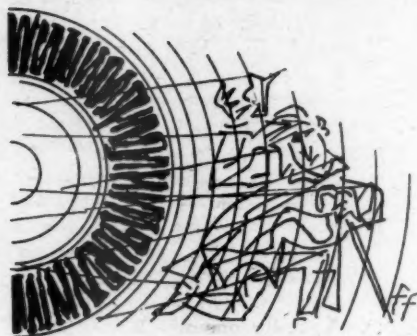
PUNCH INDEX

The indexes of *Punch* contributions are now issued separately. The latest, for August to December, 1959, may be obtained free on application to the Circulation Manager, PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Readers who have their copies bound in the standard binding covers need not apply. The indexes are supplied with the covers.

A Meditation on Transport

Little Brief Authority



The "Age of Speed" - By J. B. Morton

IT is generally admitted that in the matter of motor traffic both the authorities and the public have reached the stage of acute perplexity and exasperation. The admission is made reluctantly, because it is humiliating. It challenges the feeling of satisfaction, and even of pride, in belonging to an age of remarkable scientific achievement. Beneath the incessant boasting in conversation and in the newspapers there is an undercurrent of doubt. We have been given the tools, superb tools, but we cannot do the job. The machine is slowly mastering the man. Theoretically we can now go faster and faster from one place to another; in practice we are slowing to a standstill.

It is noticeable that everybody except the Ministry of Transport and the 121,343 subsidiary "experts" and "spokesmen" has his own drastic solution of the traffic problems. I myself heard the whole affair settled the other day. "All that is necessary," said a motorist, "is to build a large number of broad, straight motorways, like those in Germany and America." When I reminded him that England is a small country, he replied, with devastating logic, "That has nothing to do with it." I think that he had a vision of villages, small towns and thousands of acres of mere agricultural land being bulldozed, so that a kind of conveyor belt would carry cars at an unlimited speed from one large town to another (thus contributing to the traffic problem of each). His companion applauded this constructive planning, but added a rider. He would ban small, slow cars, and

elderly drivers. I said that I thought this rather hard on the poorer and older driver, and I asked him if he was quite sure that it was the careful driver of mature years who caused accidents, rather than the over-confident, adventurous youngster. To my anticipated delight he then uttered the most profoundly stupid of all the dangerous drivers' slogans or war-cries. He said "It isn't high speed that causes accidents." He added "You are not a driver, and you are not qualified to discuss the matter." "As a walker," I replied, "I am fully qualified to assert that I am more likely to survive the crossing of a road if the oncoming car is being driven slowly than if it is being driven too fast." "That is begging the question," he said.

There is only one solution to the problem, and it is not likely to appeal to the motor industry; fewer cars, a far higher standard of driving, and laws rigorously enforced. No one whose pastime is walking, who observes the behaviour of a large number of discourteous, selfish or perilously foolish drivers, and who reads in the papers the penalties imposed on those who are prosecuted, can deny this. The motorist will say that he is already badgered and annoyed and inconvenienced by the authorities. Of course he is. He is in charge of a machine which he too often cannot control, or does not bother to control, and public opinion expects the authorities to take decisive action. Both the authorities and the motorists are now thoroughly on each other's nerves. The motorist can say with

justice "Every advertisement encourages me to buy a car, for my pleasure and for getting me to and from my work. No sooner have I bought my car than I discover that it can no longer be used for pleasure or even for transport, with any degree of ease. If I go from my home to the sea I am held up for hours in a jam. If I go to my office, and leave my car where I want to leave it, the police will probably haul it away." He accuses the authorities of apathy because they have nothing but makeshift devices for solving a problem that is insoluble.



"There's always another job to do about a house!"

And they, in their turn, know that so long as more and more people use cars, chaos, mutilation and death will increase. Nobody really expects matters to improve.

Between the hammer and the anvil lies that lowest form of animal life, the pedestrian. He is a nuisance to the drivers and an embarrassment to the authorities, and curses them both as heartily as they curse one another. I mentioned to my friend the motorist that already it was difficult for a villager to cross his own street in safety. "The pedestrian has certain rights," I said. "The slow car annoys you because it interferes with your mania for speed, but the pedestrian infuriates you." He replied that most people have no traffic sense. They hesitate before crossing, or even while crossing. I answered that it would be foolhardy to make a dash for it, especially for the aged and infirm, and that the hesitation which he sneered at was the result of the fear inspired by bad drivers. When I spoke of the almost universal disregard of speed limits he said that they should be abolished, because nobody took any notice of them. "If a law is disobeyed, repeal it," said I. "Of course," he shouted.

How fares the man who abandons his car and takes to the railways? The railways have their own problems, and their own grotesque ways of dealing with them. Perpetual increases in fares do not attract passengers to dirty, overcrowded, unpunctual trains; nor persuade them to accept as a justification for outrageous overcharging the adumbration of costly modernization schemes,

and the plea of lack of money as an excuse for the antiquated hutches in which so many of us have to travel. Every day, in every paper, alongside heartening accounts of forthcoming journeys to the moon, there are hot-tempered letters about the conditions of railway travel. If there were any of the old music-halls left the station buffet and the waiting-room or ready-made morgue would still be a standard joke. It is bad psychology to imagine that dance-music roaring from amplifiers will make the tired traveller forget his misery, or that the refined voice which announces the trains gives any stronger guarantee of punctuality than the raucous voice of the porter of other days. The compartments of the train in which I occasionally travel might have been recently vacated by gipsies on the expiration of a long lease. When I asked a fellow-traveller about the much-talked-of modernization he said "By 1974 they will be able to afford to pay someone to clean windows, and even floors and seats."

By the time that the Government, weary of rescuing the railways from bankruptcy every year or so, has closed them all, the dream of two cars to a family will have come true. A major complaint will be that the new roads, built at colossal expense, were not really meant for such a congealed mass of traffic. And by that time the motoring industry will be urging three cars to a family, to keep up with the Americans. From platforms built above the roads cranes will lift broken-down cars. On larger islands than those which today accommodate terrified pedestrians

helicopters will land, manned by traffic wardens. These will collect stranded drivers whose cars have been hauled away by the police and convey them to haul-away pens, where they will claim their property. A cunning and inexpensive scheme for broadening roads, and so saving millions of man-hours and multi-millions of work-hours, will reserve the pavements for overflow traffic. Pedestrians will be diverted either to bridges built along the roofs of all the houses on each side of a street, or to long tunnels running through the houses. To enable the police to go rapidly to some area where all movement has ceased each district will have a no-way street, closed to the public. Along this the police will drive to the scene of the jam. Circling planes will report to the watch-towers along the route, and loud-speakers will issue instructions to the now immobilized police-cars. When the jam breaks, anything capable of movement will be directed by the wardens in the towers, through the maze of illuminated signs, safety-campaign posters, coloured lines, arrows, code numbers of streets, flashing exhortations, sign-posts, warnings, banners welcoming to this or that borough, winking lights and electronic traffic directors. The final sorting out will be aided by swarms of inspectors, observers supervisors, police, planning officials, experts, statisticians, itinerant mechanics, road stewards, councillors, spokesmen, overseers, co-ordination scouts, A.A. men, R.A.C. men, special constables, Ministry of Transport officials, and psychiatrists.

I'll walk.



HARGREAVES.

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